





Presents to me by my sister  
Charlotte Porter July 16..









A  
SERIES  
OF  
**LECTURES,**  
DELIVERED IN  
**PARK STREET CHURCH,**  
BOSTON,  
ON  
**SABBATH EVENING.**

BY EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D.D.  
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[L. S.]      *District of Massachusetts, to wit :*      *District Clerk's Office.*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the tenth day of May, A. D. 1813, and in the thirty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States of America, *Nathaniel Willis*, of the said District, has deposited in this Office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit: "A Series of Lectures, delivered in Park Street Church, Boston, on Sabbath Evening. By Edward D. Griffin, D. D. Pastor of Park Street Church." In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, intitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an Act entitled, "An Act Supplementary to an Act, entitled, an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

WM. S. SHAW, *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

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TO THE CONGREGATION WHO SUPPORT THE LECTURE IN  
PARK STREET CHURCH ON SABBATH EVENING.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IN dedicating to you a series of Discourses prepared for your benefit, and now published at the request of a very respectable portion of you, I think I am prompted no less by propriety than feeling. Though many of you do not belong to my particular charge, the Lecture which you have contributed to maintain is your own, and these fruits of it are your own. I am glad also to have this opportunity to express my gratitude for the liberality and candour with which you have supported that Exercise, and statedly listened to the expositions there attempted. As a distinct expression of this sentiment I commit these *plain, unadorned* Discourses which you have caused to be preached, to your patronage and protection, while in a higher sense I commend them to the favour and gracious protection of God.

Should strangers chance to cast an eye on the following pages, they will probably regard them with various feelings; but you, my brethren, will certainly read them with candour and kindness, and especially the numerous proofs adduced from the Word of God. On *these* I beseech you to ponder with deep and solemn attention and with many prayers. By the Book which furnishes these proofs we must all be judged in the Day that shall decide the eternal destinies of men. He is an infidel who will not suffer that volume absolutely to govern his faith, in spite of preconceived opinions or present reasonings. It was to be expected that a Revelation of the Infinite God would rise above the blinded reason of man. "*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*" Whoever sits down to these sheets with a proud determination, whatever the Scriptures may decide, to think for himself, will be likely to rise with his old opinions. But the man who enters on the investigation with humility and prayer, will be guided into all truth, whether he finds it in these pages or not. If any reader is resolved not to bow implicitly to the Word of God, I beseech him to close the book here.

Should any of you be tempted to think that some parts of this exposition are too much *against you*, before you decide recollect that you are a *party concerned*.

In these Discourses you will find no reasonings on points foreign to godliness,—no theories about the ORIGIN



OF SIN,—no challenge for a CONDITIONAL CONSENT TO BE DAMNED,—no perplexing speculations about TASTE and EXERCISE; (in saying this I intend no reflection on a body of men, whom, notwithstanding their speculations on these points, I venerate and love;) but you will find the fundamental and practical truths of our holy religion, a simple defence of the faith of our fathers. In expressing my own views of truth I have had no wish to give offence or pain to others. I have spoken plainly as time and circumstances seemed to require, and expect to have my motives re-examined at a tribunal from which there is no appeal. If I have censured without the gentleness of the Christian spirit, may God forgive; if with right views and feelings, to Him be the praise.

My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that even these Discourses may prove of some advantage to you and your children.

I am,

Dear Brethren,

With affectionate respect,

Your brother and servant in the LORD.

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN.

*Boston, March 26, 1813.*



# LECTURE I.

## TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

### GENESIS VI. 5.

AND GOD SAW THAT THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN WAS GREAT IN THE EARTH,  
AND THAT EVERY IMAGINATION OF THE THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART WAS  
ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY.

SUCH was the character of the whole antediluvian world, with the exception of a single family. And unless human nature is essentially changed, such is the character, with the exception of those who are renewed by grace, of the whole modern world. But human nature is not changed. It never was tainted with any thing worse than inordinate self-love; it is tainted with that still. The nature of man, like that of other animals, remains essentially the same in every period and condition. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."\* Different restraints may be imposed, by light, by example, by civilized habits, by divine and human laws, by motives growing out of peculiar circumstances, by more or less activity in the social affections; but till a new nature is im-

\* Prov. xxviii. 19.

planted, selfishness gives essentially the same form in the sight of God to every human character. He that only “hateth his brother is a murderer;” he that cherishes an impure desire is an adulterer; he that covets is an idolater.\* In this polluted principle lurk the seeds of all sin; and where nothing else of a *moral* nature exists, as in all cases where “true holiness” is wanting, it constitutes the whole character in the sight of God. Of course the character of all unholy men, however variously compressed by restraints, is specifically the same.

What then does our text affirm of all unsanctified men? That *every* imagination of the thoughts of their heart is *only* evil *continually*. Language could not more fully or plainly assert that fundamental doctrine of our holy religion which I shall lay at the foundation of these Lectures, that *man-kind by nature are totally depraved*.

But what is meant by Total Depravity? Not that men are as bad as they can be; for in general they lie under strong restraints. Not that they are all equally wicked; for some are more restrained than others. Not that they are destitute of every thing useful and lovely in society; their humanity and social affections are decidedly of this character. Not that the *form* of their actions is always wrong; the contrary is manifestly true. It is only meant that they are utterly destitute of *holiness*, and of course are sinful so far as their feelings and

\* Mat. v. 28. Eph. v. 5. Col. iii. 5. 1 John iii. 15.

actions partake of a *moral* nature. It certainly is not meant that they are *necessarily* inclined to evil without the power of resistance. They possess ample power, and in all their wickedness are voluntary and free.

This is the precise shape of the doctrine to be supported. The principal arguments on which it rests will be detailed in this and the three following Lectures.

*Argument I.* By the first creation or birth mankind are united to the first Adam, and inherit the character which he possessed immediately after the fall, until by a second creation or birth they are united to the Second Adam, and become partakers of His holiness.—It is necessary to view this argument by parts.

I. Depravity is derived from Adam. This is proved,

(1.) From the *universal* depravity of man. “God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for *all flesh* had corrupted his way.” “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are *all* gone aside; they are together become filthy; there is *none* that doth good, *no not one*.” “We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are *all* under sin; as it is written, There in *none* righteous, *no not one*: there is *none* that understandeth; there is *none* that seeketh after God. They are *all* gone

out of the way ; they are together become unprofitable ; there is *none* that doth good, *no not one*.—Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall *no flesh* be justified.” “The Scripture hath concluded *all* under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” “If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.—If we say that we have not sinned we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” God “now commandeth *all* men *every where* to repent.”\*

So deeply is sin rooted in the human heart that the continued struggles of the best men, with all the means and aids derived from heaven, have never prevailed in a single instance to eradicate it entirely. “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” “There is not a just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not.” “In many things we offend all.” “For there is no man that sinneth not.”†

Now here is a wonder to be accounted for,—sin tainting every individual of Adam’s race, in every age, country, and condition, and surviving in every heart all exertions to destroy it. One would think this might prove, if any thing could prove, that sin belongs to the *nature* of man as much as reason or speech, (though in a sense altogether compatible

\* Gen. vi. 12. Ps. xiv. 2, 3. and cxxx. 3. Acts xvii. 30. Rom. iii. 9—12, 20. Gal. iii. 22. 1 John i. 8. 10. † 1 Kings viii. 46. Prov. xx. 9. Eccl. vii. 20. James iii. 2.

with *blame*,\*) and must be derived, like other universal attributes of our nature, from the original parent,—propagated precisely like reason or speech, (neither of which is *exercised at first*,)—propagated like many other propensities, mental as well as bodily, which certainly are inherited from parents,—propagated like the noxious nature of other animals. If the phenomenon is not accounted for in this natural and easy way, so analogous to that great law by which all animals propagate their kinds and their *dispositions*, it must remain to the end of the world an unsolvable mystery. I prove the derivation of sin from Adam,

(2.) From the fact that mankind are *born* depraved.

Whether the depravity of infants consists in exercises or disposition, or whether from the first or at what age they begin actually to sin, I shall by no means allow myself to inquire. Without denying what others may choose to assert on these points, all that I can feel authorized to say is, that, as the young lion is born not an elephant, but with a carnivorous nature, though he does not at first feed on flesh; and as the serpent is not a dove, but possesses a poisonous nature, while yet in the egg; and both will certainly act out their peculiar nature when they arrive at maturity; so infants are born with a nature which, *not by necessity, but*

\* Compatible with blame, because an *hereditary* propensity is as much the *spontaneous* action of the heart as any other; and to be *willing* is to be *free*; to be *voluntary* in sin is to be *blameworthy*.

by the *free consent of the heart*, will in all cases actually sin as soon as they are able. Without denying that more is true, I mean to *assert* no more when I speak of the depravity of infants, and when I call them *sinner*s. Least of all do I undertake to decide on their condition in a *future world*. In the hands of divine mercy I leave them, and bow in submissive silence. That infants in this sense are depraved, I argue,

[1.] From the fact already established that in all ages and nations, without a single exception, they *do sin* when they arrive at years of discretion. This furnishes the same evidence that they are born with a bent to evil, that is furnished by the universal propensity of lions to feed on flesh, that they are born with a carnivorous nature. I argue this,

[2.] From the sufferings and death of infants. If it be said that the sufferings and death of *brutes* furnish the same evidence of *their* depravity, I admit that the groans of the irrational creation, as well as the briers and thistles of the ground, prove that the nature of all things is marred by the sin of man. But for this no animals would have been carnivorous, none poisonous, none resentful.\* The fall of man, though it could not infect brutes with *moral* depravity, has occasioned a real depravation of their nature. No animals are found, if possessed of sufficient vigour, which are not ca-

\* Isa. xi. 6—9. and lxxv. 25.



pable of bitter animosity. I am willing to regard the sufferings of the irrational tribes as a publick token of the depravation of their nature; and must by analogy regard the sufferings and death of infants as a token of the depravity of a nature created for *moral* action.

In relation to *mankind* it is a fundamental maxim of divine government that “the curse causeless shall not come.” “Whoever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?”\* I forbear to insist on the several recorded instances of the destruction of infants *expressly* in token of God’s displeasure against sin, as at the time of the flood, the burning of Sodom, (which ten righteous persons would have saved,†) the plagues of Egypt, the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, of Achan, of the nations of Canaan, of Jerusalem, of Babylon;‡ as also the express *command*, in several instances, to destroy infants with their parents as a punishment for sin.§ I forbear to insist on these; for in that memorable passage in the 5th of Romans, the apostle appears to have settled the point that death comes upon the whole human race, (not as it does on brutes,) in consequence of *their sin*, of nature or practice. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon *all* men, *for that*

\* Job iv. 7. Prov. xxvi. 2. † Gen. xviii. 32. ‡ Exod. xii. 29. Numb. xvi. 27—33. Deut. ii. 34. and iii. 6. and vii. 2. and xxxii. 25. Josh. vii. 24, 25. Isai. xlii. 18. Jer. ix. 21. and xlv. 7. Lam. ii. 11, 19, 20. and iv. 4, 10. § Num. xxxi. 17. 1 Sam. xv. 3. Ezek. ix. 6.

*all have sinned.*" His argument plainly rests on the principle that among the human race, (not among brutes,) the empire of sin and that of death are coextensive. If in the sequel he makes the *visible* ground of the death of infants to be the publick sin of Adam, (a point which I freely concede,) I hope to show hereafter that for the posterity of Adam to suffer any evil on account of his sin, is itself a sufficient proof that they partake of his depravity. I argue the depravity of infants,

[3.] From their need of a Saviour, and from their being brought to a Saviour in baptism. "We thus judge that *if* One died for all, *then were all dead*, and that *He died for all.*"\* If infants are saved *by Christ* certainly they are sinners, (in the sense already explained,) for He came to save none but sinners. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."† Whoever is entitled to salvation *by law* cannot be saved *by grace*. But if infants are not saved by grace, and by Christ, why bring them to Him in baptism, and fix upon them the seal of the covenant of grace? If they are pure, why sprinkle them with water as if they were unclean? Why was an ordinance instituted to set forth their need of purification? If children are spotless infant baptism is a jest. But their depravity is settled,

[4.] By express declarations of Scripture. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did

\* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

† Mat. ix. 12, 13.

my mother conceive me.” “What is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous?” “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” “How can he be clean that is born of a woman?” “The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born.” “I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.” “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.” “For the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” “The children of Israel—have only done evil before me from their youth.” “As for thy nativity, [alluding to the pollution and ruin accompanying the first birth, and the remedy which divine mercy provided,] in the day thou wast born—thou [wast not] washed in water,—but thou wast cast out in the open field to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live : yea I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.” “That which is born of flesh is *flesh*,”—is *carnal*. “The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him.” “Among whom we all had our conversation,—and were *by nature* children of wrath even as others.”\*

\* Gen. viii. 21. Job xiv. 4. and xv. 14. and xxv. 4. Ps. li. 5. and lviii. 3. Prov. xxii. 15. Isai. xlvi. 8. Jer. xxxii. 30. Ezek. xvi. 4, 5. John iii. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Eph. ii. 3.

Now if all mankind are born depraved, there is the same evidence that depravity is propagated from father to son through all generations, as that speech, or reason, or any of the natural affections are, (though in a sense entirely compatible with *blame*,) and of course is to be traced equally with them to the original parent.

But if on the other hand infants receive their whole nature from their parents pure,—if when they leave the duct through which all properties are conveyed from ancestors they are infected with no depravity, it is plain that they never derive a taint of moral pollution from Adam. There can be no conveyance after they are born, and his sin was in no sense the occasion of the universal depravity of the world, otherwise than merely as the *first example*. These two points, the depravity of infants, and the derivation of sin from Adam, stand or fall together. Either infants are born depraved, (just as they are born with the faculties of reason and speech, and with the instincts on which are founded the natural affections,) or the universal depravity of man no more follows from the sin of Adam than from the sin of Noah. I prove the derivation of sin from Adam,

(3.) From the fact that we are involved by him in condemnation and punishment.

In condemnation at least to *temporal* evils. That all the temporal evils pronounced upon our first parents, the toil and trouble, the thorns and thistles, the state of female subjection, the pains of

child-birth, and death itself, do in fact come upon their posterity, not casually, but according to the original sentence, is so evident that it is not denied. Just cast your eyes however on the following texts: “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence; for Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity.” “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. [And to prolong the quotation though the subject changes,]—The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy such are they also which are earthy, and as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”\*

It has been said that the temporal evils contemplated in the original sentence, were entailed on mankind merely as *blessings*. But how could they be regarded as blessings unless the race were

\* Gen. iii. 16—19. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45—49. 1 Tim. ii. 12—15.

viewed as *sinner's standing in need of chastisement*? It is no blessing to a perfectly holy being to suffer. The very supposition that they were entailed as blessings, gives up the argument. But the death entailed, (and by a parity of reason all the temporal sufferings which come by Adam,) is represented in the 5th of Romans, not as a mercy, but as a punishment following a sentence of condemnation.

But in whatever light you regard these sufferings, whether as blessings or punishments, God distinctly disclaims the principle of inflicting them on *innocent* children for the sins of the parents. At the time of the Babylonish captivity the Jews thought they had reason to complain, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Ezekiel was sent to reprove them, and to say, "What mean ye that ye use this proverb?—The soul that sinneth *it* shall die.—If he beget a son that seeth all his father's sins,—and doth not such like,—he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall surely live.—Yet say ye, Why, doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right,—he shall surely live. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon *him*, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon *him*." God indeed visits "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and

fourth generation ;” but it is upon the generations “*of them that hate*” Him. When Josiah confessed, “Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because *our fathers* have not hearkened,” the answer was, “I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof,—because *they* have forsaken me.” They suffered for the sins of their fathers because they partook of their fathers’ sins. On the same principle the sins of persecuting ancestors were visited upon that generation who persecuted Christ and His apostles. “Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; *THAT upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth*, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew, [the crime had been committed five hundred years before,] between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.” For the same reason the sin of Esau was visited upon his posterity: “For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because *he did pursue his brother with the sword*, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear *perpetually*, and kept his wrath *forever*.” Precisely for the same reason the sin of Adam is visited upon his posterity in temporal calamities and death: “*Thy first father hath sinned*, AND

*thy teachers have transgressed against me ; THEREFORE I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.*"\* Thus the temporal evils entailed on men for the sin of Adam, incontestably prove that they partake of his depravity.

There is one passage which has been understood to assert that the posterity of Adam are condemned for his sin to *eternal* death. The passage is in the 5th of Romans. It certainly affirms that they are *condemned* for his sin ; but whether to temporal only, or to eternal death, is a question which I have no call to decide. Whichever death is intended the passage opens to my view the following theory. Adam was the federal head of his posterity. The covenant with him provided that if he stood they stood, if he fell they fell. It made him the root from which all the branches should derive their nature. It was as though they had all been contemporary with him, and with their hearts his heart had been connected by innumerable veins or conductors to convey instantly his purity or poison to them. Thus inseparably united in temper, his publick transgression was as much the index of their hearts as of his own,—as much the index of their hearts as though it had been their own hand which had plucked the forbidden fruit. His publick act, standing thus in the

\* Exod. xx. 5. 2 Kin. xxii. 13, 16, 17. Isai. xliii. 27, 28. Ezek. xviii. 1—20. Amos i. 11. Zech. i. 1. Mat. xxiii. 34—36.



place of an *external* act of theirs, became the ground of their *publick* condemnation, (whatever the sentence included,) in the same sense in which the *outward* act is in any case the ground of condemnation. In no case is it the ground otherwise than as being, or supposed to be, the index of the heart. And Adam's posterity would not have been condemned for his act had not their hearts been as completely indicated by it as they could have been by any act of their own. Of course every evil denounced against them for his sin, (whether temporal or eternal,) proves that they partake of his depravity.

(1.) The derivation of sin from Adam is supported by other passages of Scripture. Of these however I shall mention but two. "Adam—begot a son in his own likeness, after his image." Was it necessary after mankind had seen animals propagate their kinds for twenty-five-hundred years, for Moses to inform the world that Adam begot a son *with a body shaped like his own*? In the other passage the original righteousness and the subsequent sins of man, are spoken of as the righteousness and sins of the *species*, as if the whole race lost their original holiness in Adam: "Lo this only have I found, that God hath made *man* upright, but *they* have sought out many inventions."\*

\* Gen. v. 3. Eccl. vii. 29.

Thus I have shown in the first part of the argument, that depravity is derived from Adam. I am now to show you,

II. That this depravity is *total*.

(1.) Adam himself sunk into total depravity as soon as he had broken the covenant. That the wages of sin involved abandonment to unmixed depravity, I suppose will not be denied. One thing is certain, from that moment he could receive no favour but by *grace*; for grace is favour to the *ill-deserving*. No divine influence could from that moment work holiness in his heart without being an operation of grace, or favour to the *ill-deserving*. If such an influence was necessary to make him holy, he must have remained utterly destitute of holiness till it was given him by *grace*. Every man then who believes that God is the source of holiness, in any other sense than by creating rational beings and leaving them to themselves, must believe that the fallen Adam was totally depraved till restored by the dispensation of grace.

(2.) Adam transmitted to his posterity the nature which he possessed immediately after the fall, not the nature which he received by grace. The moment he broke covenant by one offence, he had done all that he could do to fix the character and fate of his offspring.\* He was their federal head in his fall, but not in his reascent. He left them

\* Rom. v. 12—21.

there, to be raised not by him but by Christ. The idea that he became restored, and propagated that restored nature to his seed, is making him the federal head in the *restoration* of the world,—is putting him exactly in the place of the Second Adam. But the experience of a hundred generations evinces that grace is not hereditary.

It is apparent then that the posterity of Adam, *viewed as existing immediately after the fall*, were totally depraved: and if any or all of them were ever to be restored to the lowest degree of holiness, or even to a neutral state, it was to be accomplished by Christ under the dispensation of grace. Let us then inquire,

(3.) Whether the race were so restored by Christ at the time of the first promise in Eden, that they come into the world in successive generations otherwise than totally depraved.\* To this question I answer,

[1.] That there is not a particle of evidence that the posterity of Adam were at all affected by his sin, except what is contained in those declarations and facts which apply to them exclusively *after*

\* It has been said that mankind would have been left by the fall in as deplorable a condition as the author represents, had not a Saviour been provided; but by means of this provision their lapsed powers have been restored, and they have come into the world in every generation with minds resembling a sheet of white paper,—without a stain, but susceptible indifferently of good and bad impressions. As a *species*, according to this hypothesis, they both fell and were restored before any posterity existed. This idea of an *antecedent restoration* is what the author has endeavoured to meet.

*they come into existence.* Cast your eye over the texts on which all our knowledge of the connexion between Adam and his posterity depends, and you will find them uniformly referring to a posterity in actual existence, and no other. The notion that greater evils were antecedently denounced against that posterity by law than they actually find at their entrance on existence, is a fancy unsupported by a single hint in all the Bible.

[2.] This opinion has arisen from two mistakes :

First, from the idea that infants are born pure. This has been shown to be an error; but if it were not, it would not justify the notion of an antecedent restoration. If infants are born pure, as they can draw no pollution from Adam afterwards, they *never* derive any depravity from him. Those texts then which relate to Adam's posterity, must not be understood to import that an *existing* posterity are tainted by his fall. But *no other* posterity are referred to in any text in the Bible. We are left then without a particle of proof that the posterity of Adam fell with him in any sense. But if they did not fall they could not be restored. Thus take away the depravity of infants and you find no *occasion* for this antecedent restoration; admit their depravity and it is manifest they are not restored.

Secondly, this opinion has arisen from the idea at the lapsed powers of man needed to be repair-

ed to fit him for a state of probation. Lapsed powers repaired! What powers had lapsed? Not the *natural* powers. Who will prove that Satan himself has not as vigorous an *understanding* as he had in heaven? *Will* and *affections* he also has, and is a complete moral agent, and is blamed and punished for sins committed since his fall,—for seducing our first parents, and for all his enterprises against Christ and His Church. Nothing is necessary to turn that apostate into an angel of light but a new *heart*. And what powers had *men* lost that needed to be restored? They still possessed understanding, will, and affections. They still were complete moral agents, with full ability to perform their whole duty *if rightly disposed*. All that had befallen them was, *their hearts were inclined to evil*. But how could this be remedied except by making them *holy*? And was it absolutely necessary to make them holy before putting them on probation? The very object of the probation was to decide *whether they would be holy*. For this trial what powers could they want but enough to render them moral agents? These they had; what more was it *possible* for them to possess?

The fancy of an antecedent restoration being thus removed, we are thrown back to the conclusion that men are born into the world as they were left by the fall of Adam, in a state of **Total Depravity**.

III. In this state they continue till by a second creation or birth they are united to the Second Adam, and become partakers of His holiness.

In this position two ideas are contained; viz. that the new creation or birth first unites them to Christ, and that till this union they remain destitute of holiness. Both of these positions are sustained as well by analogy as Scripture.

As men are united in depravity and condemnation to the first Adam by the *first birth* or *creation*, analogy requires that they should be united in holiness and justification to the Second Adam by nothing less than a *second creation* or *birth*. As they do not share in the depravity of the first Adam *till* they are born or created, analogy requires that they should not share in the holiness of the Second Adam till they are created or born again. As they do not share in the *depravity* of the first Adam earlier than they partake of his *condemnation*, (whatever that condemnation implies,) analogy requires that they should not partake of the holiness of the Second Adam till that union to Him by which they become completely justified. In a word, analogy requires that the new creation or birth should be that great revolution by which mankind become *first* united to Christ in *holiness*, and *completely* united to Him in *justification*.

What is thus suggested by analogy is abundantly confirmed by Scripture. That teaches us

that men are first united to Christ by the new creation: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," (then there is no union to Christ before the new creation;) "We are His workmanship *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*," (then there is no new creation earlier than a union to Christ.) That teaches us that until the new creation and union to Christ the old nature remains entire, and that a nature altogether new is at that time imparted: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; *old things are past away*, behold *ALL things are become new*." "They that are Christ's, [and if the assertion has any meaning, *none but they*,] have crucified the *flesh*." By flesh is meant all that man is by the *first birth*: "That which is born of the flesh is *flesh*." None therefore but they who are united to Christ have begun to crucify the nature with which they were born. None begin to "put off the *old man*" till they begin to "put on the *new*;" but to "put on the new man" is to become "*a new creature*." As might therefore be expected, the two births are represented as the two *sources*, if I may so say, of all the moral qualities which men ever possess. The whole is told when it is said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Hence under the two denominations of flesh and spirit, (every where set in the strongest opposition to each other,) are comprehended all the moral qualities of the human race. The whole

warfare between contending principles is expressed in these words, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." Hence mankind are represented as remaining, (under the denomination of *natural men*,) what they were by nature, till they become spiritual men by receiving the Spirit of God: "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; but he that is spiritual judgeth all things.*" And hence the term *natural*, under which is included every moral quality not derived from the Spirit, is used as synonymous with *fleshly, sensual, wicked*: "These [*mockers,—who walk after their own ungodly lusts,*"] *natural*, having not the Spirit." "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, *natural*, devilish."\*

But the evidence arising from the new creation or birth is worthy to be presented in the form of a distinct argument, and in this shape shall appear in the following Lecture.

\* John iii. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. v. 17, 24. Eph. ii. 10. James iii. 15. Jude 19.



## LECTURE II.

### SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

#### GENESIS VI. 5.

AND GOD SAW THAT THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN WAS GREAT IN THE EARTH,  
AND THAT EVERY IMAGINATION OF THE THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART WAS  
ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY.

*Argument II.* THERE is a change wrought in the elect in some part of their lives, by which they receive the first holy principle: of course they possessed no holiness before.

That this change introduces the first holy principle, is apparent from the *names* by which it is called. Of these the most remarkable are, *the new creation* and *new birth*. If these names are not utterly insignificant they import the BEGINNING of LIFE. Now in the language of Scripture spiritual life is holiness.\* As then the first birth or creation is the beginning of natural life, the new creation or birth, if these terms have any meaning, must be the beginning of holiness. To say that these names denote a *progress* in spiritual life, is

\* Rom. vi. 4—13. and viii. 6, 10. and xi. 15. Eph. ii. 1. Col. iii. 3.

to say that the new creation or birth is repeated upon Christians every day. But why call a *progress* in life a creation or a birth, rather than by any other name to be found in language. To be consistent you must call the progress *from youth to manhood* a creation and a birth.

The very phrases *new creation* and *new birth* carry in them an intimation that the first creation or birth was totally defective, and must be entirely done over again; that the defect can be remedied by no other means; that we remain what the first creation or birth made us until new made and new born; and that something is produced in this change which did not exist before. What is a new creation if nothing *new* is created? What is a new birth if nothing *new* is born?

This argument must be conclusive if the terms under consideration really denote the *beginning* of spiritual life in the *soul*. One of three things must be true. They denote the *beginning* of spiritual life in the *soul*, or the *progress* of that life, or something *distinct from inward holiness*. To apply them to the progress of that life, is exactly like calling the advance *from youth to manhood* a creation and a birth. That fancy must be given up. Only this alternative then remains: either the terms denote the *beginning* of holiness in the *soul*, (and then the argument is irresistible,) or they denote something *distinct from inward holiness*. The latter has been asserted. The only way attempted

to avoid the force of this argument has been to allege that nothing more is meant by the new creation than a conversion from pagan or Jewish darkness to the *profession* of Christianity, and nothing more by the new birth than an introduction to the visible Church by baptism. The decisive question to be tried then is this, Do these terms denote the production of real holiness of heart, or a mere introduction to the visible Church, from a pagan, Jewish, or Christian state?

Before putting this question to trial I will make two preliminary remarks.

First, if these and other terms of similar import were used in primitive times to denote that revolution which took place at the translation of men from *pagan* or *Jewish* darkness and sin into the light and holiness of the Christian state, it is not necessary to suppose that they expressed merely or chiefly the *outward* change. If they were applied in the *absolute* form to *visible* Christians; if in the lips of men they even became proper names of what was *apparent to the eye* in the Christian character; it is natural to suppose that they were used, not to denote a *hypocritical show*, but to distinguish what was deemed an expression and evidence of the change within. When we point to the visible figure of a human being, and call it a *man*, we do not mean to overlook the soul that chiefly constitutes him such. If there is such a thing as inward

holiness, there is such a thing as outward holiness, and in the languages of men the outward and inward character will be called by the same name. We daily speak in the absolute form of men's conversion, without meaning to say that conversion is a mere visible change. We call a man who is externally good, a good man, and one who makes a credible profession of Christianity, a Christian, though we know that these names imply and chiefly express an inward character. *Honest man, friend*, and all the terms descriptive of character, are daily used in the same way. And because you apply such appellations to men whose hearts you cannot know, is it to be inferred that there are *honest men*, and *friends*, who are not so *in heart*? If the *visible* churches to whom the Epistles were written were called "saints," "holy brethren," "faithful," "beloved of God," "elect," "justified," "sanctified in Christ Jesus," "partakers of the divine nature," "children of God," "joint heirs with Christ," it is not necessary to suppose that these titles denoted merely an outward character and condition. Nor can they be so understood, unless Christianity is altogether an outside thing, in no degree intended to cleanse the fountain of action, or form the temper for a future life.

Secondly, if the terms under consideration really denoted an *inward* change in *Jews* and *pagans*, the same change must be wrought in people

in a *Gospel land*, unless they *already possess the temper denoted by the terms*. If any can be found who are not what is really intended by *new creatures* and *new born*, it is plain that they must be created and born anew. But whether all the inhabitants of Christendom, or even all within the pale of the Christian Church, do possess such a character, will appear when the import of these terms comes to be examined.

Now for the trial of the question. Do the terms *new creation* and *new birth* denote the production of *real holiness of heart*, or a mere introduction to the *visible Church*, from a pagan, Jewish, or Gospel state? Let us examine the two phrases separately.

First, of the *new creation*. It is by this operation that “the new creature” or “new man” is formed. What account then have we of the new creature or new man?

To be a new creature is to be *in Christ*: “We are His workmanship *created in Christ Jesus*.” Unless then a union to the visible Church actually unites one to Christ, something more is meant by the new creation. It is absolutely necessary to be a new creature in order to be in Christ: “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” Unless then a union to the visible Church is *essential* to a union with Christ, something more is meant by the new creation.\*

\* 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10.

Here let us settle once for all what is meant by being *in Christ*. To be in Christ is to be so im-mured as it were in Him as to be completely sheltered from condemnation: "There is—now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*." It is to be "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones:" "So we being many are one body *in Christ*." It is to have a sure title to all the promises. The promises were all made to Christ, and are represented as laid up *in Him* for all who are there inclosed: "To Abraham and his Seed were the promises made: He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of One, and to thy Seed, which is Christ." "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise *in Christ*." "For *all* the promises of God *in Him* are yea, and *in Him* amen." To be in Christ is to be in Him as in a house which will inclose us after all visible churches shall cease,—which will inclose us when we lie in the grave, and when we rise. The apostle speaks of those who had "fallen asleep *in Christ*," and says that "the dead *in Christ* shall rise first." In short this was a common expression used by the apostles to denote the union of *real* Christians to Christ.\* And all this is implied in being a *new creature*.

\* Rom. viii. 1. and xii. 5. and xvi. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 1. and xv. 18, 22. 2 Cor. i. 20, 21. and xii. 2. Gal. i. 22. and iii. 16. Eph. iii. 6. and v. 30. 1 Thes. iv. 16.

To be a *new creature* is to possess that faith which worketh by love, and avails to salvation. Compare the two following texts, standing near each other in the same Epistle: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*.” “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but *faith which worketh by love*.” Again, as far as the new creation proceeds it annihilates the nature with which we were born, and produces something entirely new: “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: *old things are passed away, behold ALL things are become new*.” Again, to become a new creature or new man is to be delivered from the power of sin, and to be made holy in heart and life: “We are His workmanship *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*.” “Our *old man* is crucified with Him, *that the body of sin might be destroyed*.” “Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the *old man* with his deeds, and have put on the *new man*, which is *renewed in knowledge AFTER THE IMAGE OF HIM THAT CREATED HIM*.” What more do you require? Show me, you say, a text which plainly declares that the new creation produces *true holiness*. That text you shall see. “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be *renewed in the spirit of your minds*: and that ye put on the

*new man*, which AFTER GOD IS CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS.”\*

If these texts do not establish the point that the new creation is something more than a change in the *outward* character and condition;—if to be renewed *in the spirit of our mind*, after the image of Him that created us,—if after God to be created in righteousness and true holiness, does not mean to be made holy as He is holy, it is impossible to express that idea in language. Let us now turn,

Secondly, to the *new birth*. The meaning of this phrase cannot be mistaken if you attend to the *figure* as it is carried out into the cause, means, and effects. The subjects of the *new birth* are *begotten* of God, by the incorruptible *seed* of the Word,—are *born* His children, the *seed* of Christ, the *heirs* of God, and *joint heirs* with His Son. That all these terms are only the expansion of the *same figure*, and refer to one and the same change, will be seen by a single glance at the following texts:

“Whosoever believeth—is *born* of God; and every one that loveth Him that *begat*, loveth him also that is *begotten* of Him. By this we know that we love the *children* of God, when we love God.”

“Whosoever is *born* of God doth not commit sin; for His *seed* remaineth in him, and he cannot

\* Rom. vi. 6. 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. v. 6. and vi. 15. Eph. ii. 10. and iv. 22—24. Col. iii. 9, 10.



sin because he is *born* of God. In this the *children* of God are manifest, and the *children* of the devil."

"To them gave He power to become the *sons* of God; which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

"The *children* of the promise are counted for the *seed*."

"If *children* then *heirs*, *heirs* of God, and *joint heirs* with Christ."

"He saved us by the washing of *regeneration*,—that—we should be made *heirs*."

"According to His abundant mercy [He] hath *begotten* us again—to an *inheritance* incorruptible;—*born* again, not of corruptible *seed*, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God."\*

Thus to be *begotten* and *born* of God is to be made His *children*, the *seed* of Christ, and the *heirs* of glory. If then to be the children of God, the seed of Christ, and the heirs of glory, implies any thing more than an *outward* character and condition,—if all this implies real holiness, to be *born again* implies the same. Pray, are none the children of God, the seed of Christ, and the heirs of glory, in a higher sense than as members of the *visible* Church? If they are, is that higher sense any where *expressed* in the Bible? If it is, *in what*

\* John i. 12, 13. Rom. viii. 17. and. ix. 8. Tit. iii. 5, 7. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 23. 1 John iii. 9, 10. and v. 1, 2.

*terms*, unless in those men under consideration? But if in the true and proper meaning of these terms the higher sense is contained, then when they are applied to the *visible Church*, they are applied to it as *visibly* possessing this character. Thus we every day call a visible church a collection of *Christians*, without meaning to say that the whole Christian character is an outside thing. But in *whatever* sense men are the children of God, the seed of Christ, and the heirs of glory, whether *visibly* or *really*, in the same sense, and no other, are they begotten and born of God. But to limit the meaning of the new birth to a relation to the visible Church, is to say that men are *really*, and in the *highest sense*, born of God, when they only *visibly* become His *children* and *heirs*.

Let us now descend to a more particular examination of the meaning of these terms, *begotten* and *born of God*, *children of God*, and *seed of Christ*.

*Begotten* and *born of God*. These terms denote a change *absolutely necessary to salvation*; and that is more than any of us would be willing to say of a union with the visible Church. “Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” They denote such a change as took place in Paul, not when he was *baptised*, but when he fell on the plains of Damascus: “Last of all He was *seen* of me also, as of one *born* out of due time.” They denote a change which to Nicodemus appeared,

after Christ Himself had explained it, altogether *mysterious*,—a change wrought by the *Spirit of God*,—by operations which can no more be seen, or calculated on, or accounted for, than the motions of the *wind*. “Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of *the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; *so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” “Of His own will begat He us.” “Which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, *nor of the will of man*, [certainly then not merely by *entering the Church*,] but of *God.*” The terms import the production of that faith which *accepts Christ, and triumphs over the world*: “As many as *received Him*, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on His name*; which were *born*—of God.” “Who-soever *believeth* [truly] that Jesus is the Christ, is *born of God*.—Whosoever is *born of God overcometh the world*, and this is the victory that *overcometh the world*, even our *faith*. Who is he that *overcometh the world* but he that *believeth* that Jesus is the Son of God?” The terms import the production of that *love* which “is the fulfilling of the law,” and that *knowledge of God* which is “eternal life.” “Every one that *loveth* is *born of God and knoweth God.*” The terms import a deliverance from *sin*, and the production of *real holiness*: “Whosoever is *born of God doth not com-*

*mit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.*" "We know that whosoever is *born of God sinneth not* ; but he that is *born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*" "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren,—being born again.—Wherefore,—as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.—Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.—Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.—Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." Of course these terms import the restoration of the *divine image* : "If ye know that *He is righteous*, ye know that every one that *doth righteousness is born of Him.*" "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is *begotten of Him*," on account of the *resemblance*. Finally, these terms import an *unfailing title to everlasting glory* : "He saved us with the washing of *regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*,—that being *justified by His grace*, we should be made *heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*" "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,—who hath *begotten us again—to an inheritance,—reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.*"\*

\* John i. 12, 13. and iii. 3—9. 1 Cor. xv. 8. Tit. iii. 5, 7. James i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 2—5, 22, 23. and ii. 1, 2, 5, 7, 9. 1 John ii. 29. and iii. 9, 10. and iv. 7. and v. 1, 4, 5, 18.

That all these ideas are really contained in the terms *begotten* and *born of God*, is still more apparent from the description given of

*The children of God.* These are they who bear the *image* of God, (a leading idea suggested by the figure,)—the image of God upon their *hearts* as well as lives. “*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*” “*Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.*” Of course the children of God are *holy*, (in some measure,) as He is holy: “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.—In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.*” “*The good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares, [FALSE PROFESSORS,] are the children of the wicked one.*” “*As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts;—but as He—is holy, so be ye holy.*” “*According as He hath chosen us—before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children.*” The children of God possess the *filial temper*, and are *led by His Spirit* which witnesses to their adoption: “*As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear,

but ye have received the *spirit of adoption* whereby we cry, *Abba Father!* The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the *children of God.*” “Because ye are *sons*, God hath sent forth the *Spirit of His Son* into your HEARTS, crying, *Abba Father.*” The children of God are constituted such by *faith in Christ*: “As many as received *Him*, to them gave He power to become the *sons of God*, even to them that believe on His name.” “Ye are all the *children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*” The children of God are *redeemed, forgiven, accepted*: “Having predestinated us unto the *adoption of children*,—to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us *accepted in the Beloved*; in whom we have *redemption* through His blood, *the forgiveness of sins.*” Of course the children of God are the objects of His tenderest *love*: “Whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth, and scourgeth every *son* whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening God dealeth with you as with *sons.*” The children of God are entitled to all the *promises*: “The children of the flesh, these are not the *children of God*, but the *children of the promise* are counted for the seed.” “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the *children of the promise.*” “To Abraham and his Seed were the *promises* made.—Ye are all the *children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*:—and if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and *heirs according to the promise.*” Finally, the children of God *will inherit eternal glory*, and will bear this

name *when all visible churches are no more* : “ If children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” “ If a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” “ In the resurrection—they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” “ The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Indeed as Christians will then enter into the full possession of their inheritance, this investiture, which is regarded as the consummation of their sonship, is called by way of eminence their adoption : “ We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”\*

Such is the account given us of the children of God ; and a similar description is given of

*The seed of Christ.* This appellation distinguishes a class of men who were promised to Christ as the fruit of “ the travail of His soul,” and are called “ the holy seed,” “ a seed” that “ serve Him,” “ the seed which the Lord hath blessed,” an “ elect” seed, born to possess the inheritance, a seed which shall be established forever, and though chastened never forsaken on account of their sins. Being the seed of Him in whom centred all the promises made to Abraham, they inherit a sure

\* Mat. v. 9, 44, 45. and xiii. 38. Luke vi. 35, 36. and xx. 33, 36. John i. 12. Rom. viii. 14—17, 21, 23. and ix. 8. Gal. iii. 7—29. and iv. 5, 7, 28. Eph. i. 4—7. and v. 1. Heb. xii. 6, 7. 1 Pet. i. 14, 15. 1 John iii. 9, 10.

*title to all covenant blessings*: “It is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end *the promise might be sure to all the seed.*” “They are not all Israel which are of Israel; [NOT ALL SEED WHO BELONG TO THE VISIBLE CHURCH;]—that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but *the children of the promise* are counted for *the seed.*”\*

After the Scriptures have spoken in this sort, is it not worse than trifling to say that *new creature, begotten of God, new-born, children of God, seed of Christ*, express nothing more than a relation to the *visible Church*? That these terms, like all others descriptive of holy character, are *applied* to visible churches, is not denied; but it is on the presumption that *they are what they profess*. Is it not the strangest fancy that ever was conceived, that because such terms are applied to visible churches, they express no more than an *outward* character and condition? Because you call members of the visible Church *Christians*, is it to be inferred that men are *real Christians without a good heart*?

Thus it appears that the new creation or new birth implies the production of real holiness of heart, or spiritual life. If then the terms have any significancy, they import the *beginning* of that life. If so, there was no holiness before. And this con-

\* Ps. xxii. 30. and lxxxix. 4, 29—37. Isai. vi. 13. and liii. 10, 11. and lxxv. 9. Rom. iv. 16. and ix. 6, 8. Gal. iii. 16, 29.



clusion, drawn from the plain meaning of the terms, is confirmed by the tenour of the numerous texts which have been cited.

*Argument III.* The Scriptures in a variety of forms plainly assert the doctrine of Total Depravity.

(1.) The manner in which they speak of *man*, *the sons of men*, and *the world*, is as if these terms stood for nothing but sinners,—as if nothing but sin was inherent in the human nature. “The way of *man* is froward and strange.” “How much more abominable and filthy is *man*, which drinketh iniquity like water.” “Do ye judge uprightly, *O ye sons of men*? yea in heart you work wickedness: you weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.” “My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, EVEN THE SONS OF MEN, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.” A direct opposition is every where set up between *God* and *man*, *God* and the *world*, *Christ* and the *world*: “Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of *God*, but the things that be of *man*.” “We have received, not the spirit of *the world*, but the Spirit which is of *God*.” “We know that we are of *God*, and *the whole world* lieth in wickedness.” “I have given them thy word, and *the world* hath hated them, because they are not of *the world*, even as I am not of *the world*.” “If *the world* hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If

ye were of *the world*, *the world* would love his own; but because you are not of *the world*, but I have chosen you out of *the world*, therefore *the world* hateth you." Hence the epithets *worldly* and *earthly* are used to express qualities altogether wicked: "Ungodliness and *worldly* lusts." "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is *earthly*, natural, devilish."\*

(2.) The *promises* of the Gospel are made to the *least degree of holiness*, and the *threatenings* of death are denounced against nothing less than an *utter want of holiness*.

Such is the tenour of the *promises*. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones *a cup of cold water only*, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward." "All things work together for good to them that *love God*," in the *least degree*. "He that *loveth me [at all,]* shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him." "*Repent* and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, [no particular *degree* of repentance is specified,] and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "He that *believeth*, [ever so *feebly*,] shall be saved."

Such also is the tenour of the *threatenings*. "Follow—holiness, *without which*, [that is, if it is *entirely wanting*,] no man shall see the Lord."

\* Job xv. 16. Ps. lvii. 4. and lviii. 1, 2. Prov. xxi. 8. Mark viii. 33. John xv. 18, 19. and xvii. 14, 16. 1 Cor. ii. 12. Tit. ii. 12. James iii. 15. 1 John v. 19.

“If any man *love* NOT the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.” “Except ye *repent*, [*in some degree*,] ye shall all likewise perish.” “He that *believeth* NOT, shall be damned.”\*

None therefore but those who are freed from the threatenings of death, and have a title to the promises of life, possess a particle of holiness.

Before I proceed further allow me to remind you of one fact with which you cannot be unac-

\* Mat. x. 42. Mark xvi. 16. Luke xiii. 3. John xiv. 21. Acts ii. 38. Rom. viii. 28. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Heb. xii. 14. If it be said that the terms which express the conditions of these promises and denunciations, are all descriptive of *general character*, (like the texts referred to in the third Lecture, p. 74—76,) the author concedes that they may be so understood without giving a wrong view of the promises and threatenings; because men who love, repent, or believe, in the least degree, do the same habitually. But while some passages almost expressly speak of general character, and are evidently confined to that view, (as those cited in the third Lecture,) many of the promises and threatenings are so constructed as plainly to imply, that those who are not entitled to the one, but are exposed to the other, are entirely destitute of holiness. Indeed by a union of *indefiniteness*, (which by omitting the notice of degrees suggests the idea of general character,) with *explicitness*, (by which the utter destitution of the wicked is sufficiently expressed,) they seem to have been constructed on purpose to hold out this precise proposition, *that they who are not holy in their general character, possess no holiness at all*. The general and sweeping tenour, for instance, of the promises and threatenings above quoted, in which no degrees of holiness are marked, but a distinct line of separation is drawn between those who love and those who love *not*, those who repent and those who repent *not*, those who believe and those who believe *not*, those who possess and those who are *without* holiness, evidently implies that they whose general character is not marked with love, repentance, and faith, are utterly destitute of these and every other holy principle. And if this is allowed to be their language, they only assert what the great body of Scripture abundantly confirms.

quainted. The Scriptures divide mankind into two classes; the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked, natural men and spiritual men, believers and unbelievers, those who are in Christ and those who are out, the justified and the condemned, the heirs of heaven and the heirs of hell. There is not a third class. With this fact before me I remark,

(3.) A number of the most simple and essential properties of a holy nature are particularly specified, and are declared not to belong to the class denominated wicked. This class possess no *love to God or Christ*. The proof of this I shall reserve for the next Lecture. This class have no *desire after God*: “The wicked—say unto God, Depart from us, for we *desire not* the knowledge of thy ways.” They have no *desire after Christ*: He is to them “as a root out of a dry ground; He hath no form nor comeliness, and when [they]—see Him there is no beauty that [they] should *desire Him*.” They do not *seek God*: “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, *will not seek after God*.” If there should be any doubt who are meant by the wicked that do not seek God, the Psalmist will resolve it at once: “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did—seek God. They are all gone aside;” “there is *none that seeketh after God*.” This class do not *fear God*, though “the fear of the Lord is the *beginning of wisdom*.” “The transgression of the wicked saith within my

heart, that there is *no fear of God* before their eyes.” And to show infallibly that by *the wicked*, in this and other similar passages, are meant the whole race of natural men, the apostle in the 3d chapter of Romans quotes these very words, and other things alleged against the *wicked* in the Old Testament, as asserted of *all* natural men, and intended to prove that “both Jews and Gentiles—are *all* under sin,” (that “every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God,”) and that “by the deeds of the law—*no flesh* [can] be justified.” This class do not *know God*: “O righteous Father, *the world hath not known thee.*” “These things will they, [the world,] do unto you for my name’s sake, because *they know not Him that sent me.*” This class are *wholly unacquainted with the way of life*: “The way of peace have they *not known.*” Hence in allusion to the conversion of sinners it is said, “I will bring the blind by a way that they *knew not*; I will lead them in paths that they have *not known.*” This class have no *spiritual discernment, or understanding, or right knowledge of divine things*: “We speak—not the wisdom of *this world*,—but—the wisdom of God in a mystery, —which none of the princes of *this world* knew; —as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of *man* the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God *hath revealed them unto us by His*

Spirit.—For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the *spirit of man* which is in him? Even so the things of *God* knoweth no man, but the *Spirit of God*.—But the *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he *know them*, because they are *spiritually discerned*.” “My people is foolish, they have not *known me*; they are sottish children, they have *none understanding*.” “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did *understand*.—They are all gone aside.” “There is *none that understandeth*.” Hence all spiritual understanding is represented as coming from God: “The Son of God is come, and *hath given us an understanding*, that we may *know Him* that is true.” “We—do not cease to pray for you,—that ye might be filled with the *knowledge of His will*, in *all wisdom and spiritual understanding*.” This class have none of that *love to their neighbour* which is required in the divine law: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and *every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God*.” This class have no true *hatred of sin*: “The *fear of the Lord* is to *hate evil* ;” but they have “*no fear of God* before their eyes.” However the body of sin may change its form, and some of its members be retrenched, they are *in no degree delivered from its dominion*: “*To depart from evil,*

*is understanding ;*” but of them it is said, “Thou hast hid their heart *from understanding.*”\*

(4.) All natural men are *the enemies of God and His Son*. This decisive proof of Total Depravity will be reserved for the following Lecture.

(5.) That natural men possess no holy principle is evident from this, that all their *actions*, so far as they partake of a moral nature, are wicked. Their “ways are *always* grievous.” They “have *only* done evil—from their youth.” They “have *only* provoked me to anger with the work of their hands.” The very “*plowing* of the wicked is sin.” Even their “*sacrifice*—is an abomination to the Lord.” “So then they that are in the flesh, [in their *natural state*,] cannot please God :” or what amounts to the same thing, “*Without faith* it is impossible to please Him.”†

(6.) The doctrine is supported by *direct and positive declarations*. “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only* evil continually.” “The heart of *the sons of men* is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.” “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of *the sons*

\* Job xvii. 4. and xxi. 7, 14. and xxviii. 28. Ps. x. 4. and xiv. 2, 3. and xxxvi. 1. and cxi. 10. Prov. i. 7. and viii. 13. and ix. 10. Isai. xlii. 16. and liii. 2. Jer. iv. 22. John xv. 21. and xvii. 25. Rom. iii. 9—20. 1 Cor. ii. 6—14. Col. i. 9. 1 John iv. 7. and v. 20. † Ps. x. 4. Prov. xv. 8. and xxi. 4. Jer. xxxii. 39. Rom. viii. 8. Heb. xi. 6.

*of men is fully set in them to do evil.*" "The heart is *deceitful above all things*, and DESPERATELY wicked; *who can know it?*" Whose heart? THE heart,—in the most universal form. "The *whole head is sick*, and the *whole heart faint*: *from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it*, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is *nothing pure*, but even their mind and conscience is defiled;—being abominable, and disobedient, and *unto every good work reprobate.*" "That which is born of the flesh, [by natural generation,] *is flesh*,"—is *nothing but flesh*; because all that is *spirit*, or that stands in opposition to flesh, is produced by a *second birth*: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." By flesh is unquestionably meant the old nature with which we were born. What then is the character of the flesh? Let an apostle answer: "*I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*" Will you hear him further? "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.—Now the works of the flesh are—these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.—But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.—And they that are Christ's have crucified the *flesh* with the af-



fections and lusts." Hear him yet further: "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit; for to be carnally [fleshly] minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal [fleshly] mind is *enmity against God*, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh, [in their natural state,] cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.*"

To this mass of proof may be added, what perhaps is the most decisive of all, that mankind by nature are "DEAD in trespasses and sins:" "You being *dead* in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened." "You hath He quickened who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." If you say these were heathen, let us then go to the Jews: "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved *us*, even when *we* were *dead* in sins, hath quickened *us*." "Jesus said unto him, Follow me, and let the *dead* bury their dead." "The hour is coming, and *now is*, when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." If you say these were Jews, let us go then within the pale of the Christian Church: "Honour widows that are widows indeed;—but she that liveth in pleasure is *dead* while she liveth." "These are spots

in your feasts of charity;—trees whose fruit withereth,—*twice dead*, plucked up by the roots.” “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art *dead*.”\*

The dismal picture which the apostle draws in the 3d chapter of Romans, by composing into one form the different features of the “*wicked*” which had been traced in the Old Testament; and his declaration that the features were originally intended for the *whole human family*, authorizing thus the universal application of the term *wicked* as it stands connected with those delineations; are sufficient in themselves to settle this question. Pray read that description, (and add to it the dreadful account of the whole heathen world in the first chapter;) and after being thus taught to apply to all natural men the allegations of the Old Testament against “*the wicked*,” read the descriptions of the wicked contained in the 21st chapter of Job, the 10th, 14th, 36th, 50th, and 73d Psalm, and to mention no more, the 59th chapter of Isaiah.

*Argument IV.* The representations in the Psalms and chapters above referred to, are abundantly confirmed by *the history of the world*.

But a few ages had elapsed after the fall of man before “the earth was filled with violence,”

\* Gen. vi. 5. Eccl. viii. 11. and ix. 3. Isai. i. 5, 6. Jer. xvii. 9. Mat. viii. 22. John iii. 6. and v. 25. Rom. vii. 18. and viii. 5—9. Gal. v. 17—24. Eph. ii. 1, 4, 5. Col. ii. 13. 1 Tim. v. 3, 6. Tit. i. 15, 16. 1 Pet. iv. 6. Jude 12. Rev. iii. 1.

and the whole world, with the exception of a single family, must be swept away with a flood. As soon as men began to multiply again on the earth, the whole race, except one family preserved by a succession of miracles, apostatized to idols. “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.—For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections,” to wallow in the most unnatural and brutal lusts. “As they *did not like to retain God in their knowledge*, God gave them over to a reprobate mind;—being *filled with all* unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; *full of envy*, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, *haters of God*, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful,” “murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers.”\* Only collect the crimes committed in the Assyrian and Persian courts, including the frequent murder of the nearest relations to open a way to the throne, and without looking further this whole catalogue of charges stands supported. Sodom was but a specimen of the heathen world.

\* Rom. i. 22—32. 1 Tim. i. 9, 10.

And if you turn from this wilderness to the vineyard on which all the culture of heaven was bestowed, you see little else than the grapes of Sodom and clusters of Gomorrah.\* Under the glories of the burning mount, while the voice of God was still sounding in their ears, they constructed a molten calf, and stupidly cried, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."† Their unbelief and rebellion never ceased. From generation to generation their lust after other gods could scarcely be restrained by all the miracles wrought before their eyes,—by all the fervid expostulations of anxious prophets. Those prophets they slew, and at length filled up the measure of their iniquity by the murder of the Son of God.

And what has the *Christian* world exhibited? Must I retrace that apostacy which gave one half of the Church into the hands of the Saracens and Turks? Must I measure over those scenes of pride and pollution which laid the other half at the feet of the Man of Sin? Must I revisit the faggots of the martyrs, and wade through the seas of blood which have been shed by hands bearing the cross? Look where you will, and the deep depravity of man on every side appears. The history of the world is a history of crimes. The earth has been from the beginning a great Aceldama, a shambles of blood. And lest it should be thought that Chris-

\* Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. Isai. v. 1—7.

† Exod. xxxii. 1—6.

tianity, and science, and modern refinement, have tamed the natural heart, *the most polished nation on earth*. in the centre of the Christian world, has been selected to take the lead in that scene of atheism and violence reserved for the latter day,—reserved to make a full developement of the human character, that the millennium might be introduced without a remaining doubt on earth of the total depravity of man.

This horrid scene, in the centre of the Christian Church, was foretold by astonished prophets. “This know,—that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own-selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, *having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*” “And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”\*

Such is the history of *man*,—of man under every form of society, pagan, Jewish, and Christian. And it furnishes a fair illustration of what selfishness will do *in spite of all the affections of nature*, when *divine* restraints are taken off, and

\* 2 Tim. iii. 1—9. Rev. xvi. 21.

sufficient temptations occur. It may then be regarded as the history of *every* man *left to himself*. For “as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.” The conduct of those wretches who are recorded as prodigies of iniquity, is only an exemplification of selfishness, and a specimen of what every man would do if left of God. All doubt on this subject will be removed as soon as the wicked enter the eternal world and begin to exercise the rage of the damned. Hence in the descriptions of man which are drawn by the Holy Ghost, crimes, that have not been *acted out* by all, but by a part as a sample of the rest, are set down among the characteristicks of the whole human family.\*

But men will be slow to believe all this, because they are ignorant of themselves. No man knows what is in his heart further than he is tried; because no man knows what selfishness, restrained only by nature, is capable of doing. Hazael could say, “Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?” and yet he did it.† The Jews who crucified the Saviour of the world, thought that if they had lived in the days of their fathers they should not have slain the prophets.‡ And if any of you are dreaming that, left to yourselves, you should not go the length of those whose history you have reviewed, let that dream end at this spot,—“The heart is *deceitful above all things* and desperately wicked; *who can know it?*”

\* Rom. iii. 9—20.

† 2 Kin. viii. 13.

‡ Mat. xxiii. 30.

## LECTURE III.

### NATURAL AFFECTIONS NOT HOLINESS.

HEBREWS XII. 14.

FOLLOW PEACE WITH ALL MEN, AND HOLINESS, WITHOUT WHICH NO  
MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD.

SALVATION depends very much on possessing a correct view of our native ruin and need of a Saviour. For want of this many disdainfully reject the offers of grace, and undertake to recommend themselves to God in a way more gratifying to human pride. None will apply to the physician till they feel that they are sick.

The most holy and devout portion of the Christian Church have always held, with the fathers of New-England, that mankind by nature are totally depraved; by which they have meant, not that they are as bad as they can be,—not that they are all equally wicked,—not that the *form* of their actions is always wrong,—not that they are wholly destitute of love to *men*,—of all moral sense,—of all regard for the *natural* fitness there is in virtue,—of all disgust at the natural unfitness there is in vice;

but merely this, that they are utterly destitute of *holiness*. And this our text evidently implies. It virtually declares that none shall be debarred from seeing the Lord but they who are “without holiness;” which is to say, that all who are not entitled to heaven are destitute of that principle,—all who in Scripture are called sinners in distinction from saints, children of wrath in distinction from children of God, natural men in distinction from spiritual men, the world in distinction from the Church, are “without holiness.”

There are however in natural men certain resemblances of holiness which have been often alleged in opposition to this doctrine. Natural men are susceptible of gratitude and patriotism; of the domestic affections, such as subsist between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters; of humanity, including both compassion and general good wishes for the happiness of others; of a sweet disposition, enlarging their humanity, and producing gentleness, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and beneficence. They are susceptible of a sense of honour, revolting from meanness and pollution; of taste, that delights in beautiful proportions in all visible objects and relations; of conscience, or the moral sense, which approves of justice and virtue, and disapproves of vice, and when sufficiently enlightened justifies the whole law of God, and religion generally, and good men, and condemns the opposite of all these. Under the influence of these principles, fortified by education



and habit, aided by hopes and fears, by respect for human opinions and laws, by regard for good order, (especially as being necessary for their own security,) by the general good nature which prosperity imparts even to selfish minds, and by numberless associations of ideas, multitudes of natural men lead amiable and moral lives. But after all they are utterly destitute of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." To put this matter beyond a doubt, let us,

I. Inquire what holiness is.

II. Compare the world with this standard.

III. By this standard test the natural principles which have been mentioned.

I. What is holiness? Avoiding all points liable to dispute, I will give such an answer to the question as I think no man will be disposed to contradict. I will put the answer in two forms, and you may take your choice. Holiness consists in *conformity to the moral character of God*. The other answer is, Holiness consists in *obedience to His commands*. I will illustrate the principle in both forms.

(1.) Holiness consists in conformity to the moral character of God. If a doubt could rest on this point the whole Bible would join to remove it. In the image of God man was originally made, and that image is reinstampd on his soul in sanctification. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into *the same image* from glory to glory." Holiness in

creatures is the same in kind as holiness in God : “Be ye holy for I am holy.” Hence Christians are said to be “partakers of His holiness,” and “partakers of the divine nature.”\*

Holiness in creatures consists, then, in loving the same things that God loves, in hating the same things that He hates, in desiring the same things that He desires, in having the same supreme end, in rejoicing in the same things in which He rejoices ; in short, in possessing His temper, and acting it out in corresponding conduct. Let us expand these ideas. Holiness consists

*In loving the same things that God loves ; in loving therefore being in general ; (such an affection exists in God, for “God is love ;”) in loving all His perfections, in which He Himself delights ; in loving the precepts and penalties of that law which is a transcript of His nature ; in loving His providential government, which he approves ; in delighting in His will, which is necessarily agreeable to Himself ; in loving His Son, His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased ; in loving the whole plan of salvation, which He regards with infinite affection ; in loving His Word, with all its doctrines, which are dear to Him ; in loving His Church and all good men, whom He has graven upon His heart.*

*In hating the same things that God hates ; in hating sin therefore, and the characters of wicked men, and the manners of an ungodly world.*

\* Gen. i. 26, 27. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Heb. xii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 16. 2 Pet. i. 4.

*In desiring the same things that God desires ; in desiring therefore His glory, the enlargement and consummation of His Church, the universal reign of holiness, the universal belief of God-exalting and soul-debasing truths, and the fulfilment of all the designs of infinite love.*

*In having the same supreme end that God has ; in making His glory therefore the grand object of pursuit.*

*In rejoicing in the same things in which God rejoices ; in rejoicing therefore in His being, government, and glory, in the honour put upon His law, in the certainty that all His purposes will be accomplished, in the everlasting glory of His Church, and the eternal destruction of His enemies.*

*In acting out this temper in corresponding conduct,—in precisely that conduct toward God, His Son, His institutions, and our fellow men, which His Word requires.*

*Must not this, and nothing short of this, be the holiness that will fit us to enjoy and commune with God forever?—Shall I now turn to the other answer ? But as the law of God is a transcript of His nature, this answer must amount to the same thing.*

(2.) Holiness consists in obeying God's commands. Can any man doubt this ? If the law of the universal King is not the universal standard of right ; if He has left any thing unforbidden which will injure the prosperity of His kingdom ; if

He has tolerated by silence any principle or act hostile to the interests of the universe; what will you say of His government? It were blasphemy to suppose it. If the definition of sin is, that it is "*the transgression of the law*,"\* the definition of holiness must be, that it is *obedience to the law*.

But the law of God, if I may be allowed the expression, has both a body and a soul. It is not confined like human laws to external things. The law of the *moral* Governour must strike chiefly, and in a sense entirely, at the *heart*, the real seat of all moral good and evil. Now if we could find a single principle of the heart which in itself and its proper fruits comprehends complete obedience to the law, we should find holiness in its most simple and elementary form. Well that principle is found; and it is such a one as will perfectly assimilate us to the moral character of God. It is *love*,—and "*God is love*." "*Love is the FULFILLING of the law*."† But *what* love? Let the Prophet of the world, the Lawgiver Himself, reply: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*" "*All the Law, [in respect to man,] is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy-*

\* 1 John iii. 4.

† Rom. xiii. 10.

self." "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law."\* And as evangelical *faith*, the sum of Gospel duties, "worketh *by love*,"† love is the fulfilling of the Gospel as well as the Law, and comprehends all the holiness of the Old Testament and the New. This is that charity which so involves all moral excellence, that all other things without it are declared to be nothing: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, [love,] I am become as *sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal*. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am *nothing*. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, [as a *martyr*,] and have not charity, it *profiteth me nothing*."‡

All holiness then consists in that love to God, to Christ, and our neighbour, which stands opposed to selfishness, and causes us, when it is perfect, to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. But who is my neighbour? Not my friend, not my relation, not my Christian brother, not my countryman; but the *Samaritan*, (as Christ Himself explained it,||) one that is of another religion, of another nation, reputed wicked, and my natural enemy; one that has nothing

\* Mat. xxii. 37—40. Rom. xiii. 8. Gal. v. 14. † Gal. v. 6.  
‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3. || Luke x. 29—37.

to recommend him but that he is *a man*. In this is involved the spirit of all those precepts which require us to love our *enemies*, to exercise the most perfect good will and kindness to the evil and unthankful. The love then which is the fulfilling of the law, is limited to no circle, no country, but reaches as far as man is found. It is restricted by no partialities, it stops at no character, no friendships, no aversions, but centres on *simple being*. It stops not at *human being*, but goes forth to God, who comprehends in Himself infinitely the greatest portion of existence. It fixes on Him supremely, and loves Him, when it is perfect, with all the heart, and soul, and mind. And if angels, if the inhabitants of all worlds should come distinctly into view, what should hinder it from fixing on them as it now does on God and man? Nor does it stop at *intelligent being*; it goes forth with entire good will to the *sensitive* creation, to all that are capable of pleasure or pain. Surely in the love which is the *fulfilling* of the *law* must be comprehended that benevolence which causes “a righteous man” to regard “the life of his *beast*,” since this is a part of moral goodness which God has seen fit to approve.\* An affection thus going forth to *being* as such, without regard to character, relation, proximity, or species, must have for its object ALL *existence* capable of pleasure or pain. It can find nothing to limit it to the inhabitants of

\* Prov. xii. 10.

one world, except ignorance that others exist. In a finite being it will indeed act most strongly towards objects most in view ; but the same good will that can love an enemy and wish well to a brute, would for the same reason love millions of beings of other worlds as fast as they should come into view. This is that general benevolence which makes men good citizens of the universe. This is that law which was fitted for a universal empire. You must possess domestick affections to render you good members of a family ; you must have the more extended principle of patriotism to render you good members of the state : for the same reason you must possess universal benevolence to render you good subjects of a kingdom which comprises all worlds as so many provinces of a vast empire. Nothing short of this is holiness. Family regulations are necessary for the domestick circle ; civil laws are necessary for the commonwealth ; but this great law of love, which knows no limit of time or place, is fitted to be the universal statute of a kingdom comprehending all worlds.

But though this affection fixes on general being as its *primary* object, it has a *secondary* object, and that is *holy love*, including both the love of *being* and the love of *holiness*. As it delights in the happiness of general existence, it delights in that benevolence which is friendly to general existence and which loves this sacred temper in others. Like God Himself it regards with com-

placency both the love of being and the love of holiness.

May I not add as a distinct idea, that this holy affection delights in the *measures* on which the happiness of general being depends, such as the law and providential government of God, and the Gospel of Christ. It delights also in the *truths* which relate to these measures, and in those which relate to the character of God, and the mode of His existence. But this is not a distinct idea. For to love divine truths is not distinct from loving the objects which the truths disclose. The only way in which we see the objects is in the truths which relate to them, and all that we see in truth is the objects disclosed. Hence the unavoidable inference, that the haters of divine truth must be strangers to holiness.

But there is one attribute of holy love which I wish to set more distinctly in your view. Whether this affection respect being or character, it will necessarily regard *God supremely*. That benevolence which wishes well to being, will value the happiness of God more than that of all creatures, because He comprises in Himself infinitely the greatest portion of existence. That charity which takes complacency in moral excellence, will love the character of God more than that of all creatures, because He possesses infinitely the greatest portion of benevolence. Where God therefore is not *supremely* loved, there can be no holiness. This will be more evident when it is considered that



where He is not loved *supremely*, He is not loved *at all*.\* And certainly there can be no love of general being that *wholly* disregards Him who comprises in Himself infinitely the greatest portion of general being, nor any love of moral excellence that *wholly* disregards Him who contains infinitely the greatest portion of moral excellence in Himself. The man who after God is clearly revealed does not love Him, cannot possess a spark of true benevolence, nor any delight in it. This will be still more evident when it is considered that the man who does not *love* God, is His *enemy*. There can be no indifference here. You may be indifferent to a thousand things in which you have no concern; but your *King*, whose laws interfere with every action of your lives, and every motion of your hearts,—that great and dreadful King who has you in His hands, and is to make you happy or miserable to eternity,—to Him you cannot be indifferent. Him you must love or hate. And now let common sense speak: Can there be a particle of universal benevolence in those who *hate* the Being that comprehends in Himself infinitely the greatest portion of existence? Can men possess a particle of love for moral excellence, who *hate* the Being that contains in Himself infinitely the greatest portion of

\* The author does not mean to approach the question, whether in those hours when the *Christian's* love is not supreme, it is extinguished; nor the question, whether love may exist in a *disposition* when it is not *in exercise*. He only means to say, that they who *never* love God supremely, never love Him at all.

moral excellence, and even hate Him *for that very reason?*

I will now show you how far some of the foregoing views are supported by the Word of God. That teaches us, in the first place, that where God is not loved *supremely*, He is not loved *at all*. For First, it instructs us that all who love Him in the *least degree*, are accepted as Christians and heirs of salvation. All the promises are made to those who possess the smallest degree of love. “Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink *in my name*, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you he shall not lose his reward.” “Be merciful unto me as thou usest to do unto those that *love thy name*,”—in the *least degree*. “We know that all things work together for good to them that *love God*.” “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that *love Him*.” “The kingdom which He hath promised to them that *love Him*.” “The crown of life which He hath promised to them that *love Him*.”\* Secondly, it teaches us that all who are thus accepted as Christians and heirs of salvation, love God *supremely*. “He that loveth father or mother *more than me*, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter *more than me*, is not worthy of me.” “If any man come to me and *hate not* his father, and mother, and wife,

\* Ps. cxix. 132. Mark ix. 41. Rom. viii. 28. 1 Cor. ii. 9. James i. 12. and ii. 5. For a vindication of this construction of the above texts, see Note to page 49.

and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his *own life* also, *he cannot be my disciple*.—Who-soever he be of you that forsaketh *not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*.” The great rival of God is the world ; but Christians are represented as being “*dead*” to the world, as not *coveting* the world, (for “no—*covetous* man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ,”) as even “*hating* covetousness.” “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*.” “*Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee*.” To “mind earthly things,” to serve “the creature *more* than the Creator,” to be “lovers of pleasures *more* than lovers of God,” to love the praise of men *more* than the praise of God,” are set down as incontestable marks of unrenewed nature.\* But both of the foregoing particulars are comprised in a single text : “If any man love the world [*supremely,*] *the love of the Father is not in him*.”†

Thus the Scriptures instruct us that where God is not loved supremely He is not loved at all. But they stop not here. They teach us that the man who does not *love* God is His *enemy*. “He that is not *with* me is *against* me, and he that gathereth

\* Exod. xviii. 21. Ps. lxxiii. 25. Prov. xxviii. 16. Mat. x. 37. Luke xiv. 26, 33. John xii. 43. Rom. i. 25. 1 Cor. vi. 10. Gal. vi. 14. Eph. v. 5. Phil. iii. 19. Col. iii. 1—3. 2 Tim. iii. 4. † 1 John ii. 15.

not with me scattereth abroad.” In one of the ten commandments, intended for all *ages* and *nations*, the whole human race are divided into two classes, those who *love* God, and those who *hate* Him. “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that *hate me*, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that *love me*.”\* We are then brought to the conclusion that they who do not love God *supremely* are His *enemies*. And this is asserted in express terms: “No man can *serve* two masters; for either he will *hate* the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and *despise* the other: ye cannot serve *God* and *mammon*.” “The *friendship* of the world is *enmity* with God: whosoever therefore will be a *friend* of the world is the *enemy of God*.”†

All who do not love God *supremely* are then His *enemies*. But I go further. All are His *enemies* whose hearts and lives are not *governed* by this affection as their *ruling passion*, so *habitually* as to form their *general character*.‡ What

\* Exod. xx. 5, 6. Mat. xii. 30. † Mat. vi. 24. James iv. 4.

‡ What is said in this and the next paragraph is not inconsistent with the assertion repeatedly made, that the *least degree* of love entitles one to all the promises. The harmony of these thoughts will appear when it is considered, (1) that all who love God in the least degree, nay all who are not unreservedly His *enemies*, love Him *supremely*. If this point has not been sufficiently established, the reader is requested to suspend his judgment till he has perused the fourth Lecture. (2) All who love God *supremely* are *Christians*, in the highest sense of the

else can be understood by the passages already quoted? In these there is a *character* ascribed to Christians, (including all who love God *at all*.) and this character is, that they hate their nearest relations, and even life, in comparison with Him; that they do *not* “love the world,” are *not* friends of the world, do *not* “mind earthly things,” are “dead” to the world, are *not* “covetous,” are *not* idolaters, do *not* “serve mammon,” do *not* serve “the creature more than the Creator,” are *not* “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,” do *not* “love the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Whatever remaining sins they have, this is their *character*, their *only* character, then certainly their *general* character. And is it true after all that “nine hours out of ten” they are alive to the world, are friends of the world, are covetous, are idolaters, are servants of mammon, are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, are enemies of God? Then this is their *general character*, and by these names they ought to be called. Are they who are described as serving God and *not* mammon, really serving mammon and *not* God “nine hours out of ten”? After the Bible has declared that no covetous man shall inherit the kingdom of Christ, shall they inherit who remain covetous, “nine hours out

word. This will not be denied. (3) All who are truly Christians love God *habitually*. The proof of this is to be exhibited in the remaining part of this second head. Therefore, (4) all who love God in the least degree love Him *habitually*. In other words, the least degree of love will certainly in all cases be habitual,—on supposition of the Perseverance of the Saints.

of ten," to the day of their death? Is the *good man* of the Bible one who, "nine hours out of ten," differs in nothing from the wicked? Do those *temples* in which the Holy Ghost "*dwells*," contain, "nine hours out of ten," nothing but idols and enmity against God? Christians are said not to "commit sin,"\* to be "dead to sin," to be "freed from sin,"† which is explained to mean that they do not *serve* sin.‡ And after all do they sin with the *prevailing* consent of their minds "nine hours out of ten"? They indeed have large remains of indwelling corruption, and often "do that which [they] would not"; but they are allowed to plead, "It is no more *I* that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me;"|| that is, It is no more *I* in my *general character*.

It is very apparent that men are denominated in Scripture according to their *general character*. For example, when our Saviour says, "Whosoever shall *deny me* before men, him will I also deny before my Father,"§ He must speak of general character, or *Peter* falls under this sentence. When the apostle says, "Whosoever *hateth his brother* is a murderer, and ye know that *no murderer* hath eternal life abiding in him,"¶ he must speak of general character, or *David* fell from grace, and indeed all the saints daily fall. But David was not a murderer, nor Peter a denier of Christ, in the sense of Scripture, because such was

\* 1 John iii. 9.    † Rom. vi. 2, 7, 18, 22.    ‡ Rom. vi. 12, 15, 20.  
 § Rom. vii. 20.    ¶ Mat. x. 33.    ¶ 1 John iii. 15.

not their *general character*. When it is said, “There is—no condemnation to them—who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:—if ye live after the flesh ye shall die,”\* the reference must be to general character, or we must all exclaim, “Who then can be saved?” By analogy, then, the declaration that “no—covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ,” must import that no Christian is covetous or idolatrous in his *general character*. That is, no Christian habitually loves “the creature more than the Creator.”†

\* Rom. viii. 1. 13.

† To this conclusion the author has conceived himself driven by the Word of God. Any question connected with the subject which is not decided by that arbiter, he dares not touch; for instance, whether the term *love*, as it is used in the Bible, includes both the *disposition* and the *exercise*, like the root and stock of a tree which go in to make one whole; *how great a part of the time* the Christian exercises direct love to God; how far his exercises, when God is not the *immediate* object of attention, may still be regarded as love to Him. He will venture to say thus much: Other affections may hourly rise in the Christian’s heart; other passions may occasionally take possession of his mind; other objects may frequently engross his attention: his views may often be obscure when his attention is directed to God: through the insensible influence of selfish passions he may neglect to rouse himself to discern the will of God, and by that means may omit many self-denying duties which a realizing sense of divine authority would have enforced: by the same means his attention may be drawn away from the interests of others, and leave his mind to sleep over a perishing world. But in almost all these seasons let God present Himself before him, and fix the attention upon Himself, and there is found a temper to prefer Him and His interest to all other objects; there is found a heart which in the trying hour would *die* for the name of Jesus.

All then who are not the enemies of God, and of course utterly destitute of holiness, are habitually governed by supreme love to Him. Or to reverse the proposition, all who are not habitually governed by supreme love to God, are His enemies and utterly destitute of holiness.

II. With this standard let us now compare the world.

If all are destitute of holiness who do not love God *supremely*, who are not *habitually* governed by this affection, will any affirm that the mass of mankind possess a holy principle? Instead of supreme, habitual love, I shall prove that they do not love God at all, but are His enemies.

The mass of mankind do not love God at all. It has already been proved that they who love God in the *least degree* are heirs of all the promises, and will inherit eternal glory: of course all who are not entitled to heaven are utterly destitute of this affection. In the last Lecture I cited a number of texts which asserted that natural men do not *desire* God, do not *seek* God, do not *fear* God, do not *know* God, and have no *desires after Christ*. In addition to all this, I am now to present you with several classes of men who are expressly declared not to love God. They who *hate any of their fellow men*, do not love God: "*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*" The reasoning in this passage proves that there is



no love to God without *universal* love to man ; for if a single individual is excluded from our good will, the reasoning lies full against us. Again, they who *withhold alms* do not love God : “ Who-so hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, *how dwelleth the love of God in him ?*” Again, they who *reject the Gospel* do not love God. It was on this account that our Saviour said to the Jews, “ I know you that ye *have not the love of God in you.*” “ If God were your Father ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God ; neither came I of myself, but He sent me.” Again, they who *disobey God* do not love Him : “ He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.—If a man love me he will keep my words.—He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.—Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” Again, none of the wicked whom God will destroy have any love to Him : “ The Lord preserveth all them that love Him, but all the wicked will He destroy.”\*

All then who either hate any of their fellow men, (in other words, lack universal love to mankind,) or withhold alms from the needy, or reject the Gospel, or habitually disobey the divine commands, or are of the class that will finally perish,

\* Ps. cxlv. 20. John v. 42. and viii. 42. and xiv. 21, 23, 24. and xv. 14.  
1 John iii. 17. and iv. 20.

or are not at present heirs of salvation, are utterly destitute of love to God. And pray will not these classes include every natural man on earth?

That natural men possess no love to God is further evident from this, that the love of God is "*the fruit of the Spirit*:" "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy Ghost* which is given unto us."\* The same truth is further evident from the consideration that the unregenerate do not love the *image* of God in His children. "*We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.*" "*Every one that loveth [the brethren,] is born of God, and knoweth God.*"†

Thus it appears that the whole mass of natural men are entirely destitute of love to God. Here I might rest my cause. But there is proof against the world still more decisive. The whole race of natural men are His *enemies*. It has already appeared that there are no *neutrals*, that they who are not *for* God are *against* Him. This joined with the last particular makes out full proof that the whole body of natural men are His enemies. Again, it has been proved that all who serve mammon, who are friends of the world, who love another object supremely, are the enemies of God. And can it be doubted that these descriptions are applicable to all natural men? But I have further evidence to offer. Let us in the

\* Rom. v. 5.

† 1 John iii. 14. and iv. 7.

first place dispose of the *heathen world*. This great portion of the human race are expressly set down by the apostle, in the first chapter of Romans, as "*haters of God*." Nor did they obtain this character by *being* heathen, but they became idolaters because "*they did not like to retain God in their knowledge*." In the second place let us settle the question as it respects the *Jewish world*. Of this second great division of mankind our Saviour says, "*They have both seen and hated both me and my Father*." In the next place let us take up the question as it relates to the *whole world*. And what says our Saviour to this? "*If THE WORLD hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.—He that hateth me hateth my Father also*." On no other principle can you account for the rancorous opposition which the world have always made to the Gospel and disciples of Christ. "*Marvel not—if THE WORLD hate you*." "*If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household*."—"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother;—and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." "*And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake*." But the

apostle has put this question finally to rest by ranking all men among the “haters of God” who retain the carnal or natural heart: “The carnal [*fleshly*] mind is *enmity*, [not *unfriendly*, but *enmity*] against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are *in the flesh* cannot please God.” If you would know without a doubt who they are that are in the flesh, or possess the fleshly mind, our Saviour will tell you at once: “That which is *born of the flesh* is *flesh*.” This He said to Nicodemus to show him from the defect of the first birth the necessity of being born again. All that is born by *natural generation*, then, is *flesh*, is *carnal*, is *enmity against God*, until it is *born again*.\*

And now let me repeat the question, Can there be a particle of universal benevolence in those who hate the Being that comprehends in Himself infinitely the greatest portion of existence? Or a particle of love for moral excellence in those who hate the Being that contains infinitely the greatest portion of moral excellence in Himself, and hate Him *for that very reason*?

III. By the same standard let us now test the natural principles which have been mentioned.

Enough has been said to show that these principles must be essentially different from holiness, because they are found in the great mass of those who

\* Mat. x. 21, 22, 25, 34—36. John iii. 6. and v. 40. and xv. 18, 23, 24. Rom. i. 28, 30, and viii. 7, 8. 1 John iii. 13.

have been proved to be destitute of holiness. But it may be profitable to pursue this subject a little further.

I begin by remarking that these principles may easily be conceived to have been implanted in men to fit them to live together in *this* world, without being at all designed to qualify them for subjects of the universal kingdom of God. *Domestick affections* were lodged in their nature to render them good members of a *family*. But these cannot constitute them useful members of the *state* without *patriotism*. By analogy, patriotism and all the other limited affections cannot render them good citizens of the universe without *universal* love or holiness. And to cherish the hope of being qualified for heaven by these, is like expecting by mere *domestick affections* to be fitted to subserve and even to manage the interests of a *nation* without a spark of *patriotism*.

Some of these principles, (particularly the moral sense,) appear to be essential to a moral agent. Others, which are of the nature of disinterested affections, were doubtless intended to act as restraints on selfishness, to enable men to live in society; as without them it is manifest the world would be a hell, and wholly unfit for the purposes of probation. But they may all be traced to sources entirely distinct from universal love. Of these the principal appear to be three.

(1.) *Self-love*. A great part of natural gratitude, the sense of honour, and the love of country,

may be traced to this source ; the other parts, to sources yet to be named. Now I suppose it will be readily acknowledged by most of my hearers that the mere streams of self-love cannot be holy.

(2.) *The love of natural fitness*, or of beautiful proportions and relations, both in things material and immaterial. From this principle men are pleased with the proper proportions of a building, the good order of a family, the relations established in a well regulated state, the beautiful proportions of justice, of gratitude, of the virtues generally, and the exact fitness of one thing to another in the government of God. There is certainly much *natural* beauty in all these things, (independent of their *simple subserviency to the glory of God and the happiness of His creation*,) which therefore can please a mind that is a stranger to universal love. Can you not see a wide difference between delighting in *proper proportions*, and delighting in the *happiness of general being*? Yet to a law of our nature as distinct from benevolence as this, (a law aided indeed by many associations of ideas,) may be traced the operations of conscience or the moral sense,—the approbation of justice, of gratitude, of virtue generally,—the principle which we call taste,—and a part of those which are denominated honour and patriotism.

Are these principles holy? Try the question in relation to *conscience*, which perhaps has the fairest pretension to this rank. If the approbation which

conscience yields to the character and government of God were *holy love*, remorse of conscience would be *true repentance*, and then there would be true repentance in the world where the *worm never dies*.

(3.) *Instincts*. Under this head may be ranked a class of affections *really disinterested*, (because they terminate in the happiness of *others*,) amounting to a sort of *limited benevolence*. Of this class are the domestick affections. Of this class is humanity, comprehending compassion, and whatever else is pleasant in the social dispositions not included under the former names.

These affections are all amiable and useful in their place, and when duly subordinated materially aid the local operations of holy love. And being not destructible but by an uncommon domination of selfishness, their extinction becomes a mark of the last stages of degeneracy.\* But their grand defect is that they are *limited in their very nature to a contracted circle*. They do not go up to God, and breathe through Him good wishes to the whole intellectual system. They brood exclusively over a private interest, and unless bound by a better principle, are ready to fly in the face of the whole universe that comes to disturb that. In their greatest enlargement they still exclude the Creator. They stop at the threshold of being. They fix on a drop of the ocean. Should they love *a world* as tender-

\* Rom. i. 31. 2 Tim. iii. 3.

ly as a parent loves his child, and *stop there*, they would still be hostility to infinitely the greatest portion of existence. A limited affection, (limited I mean, not by the contracted view or capacity of the subject, but by *its own nature*,) necessarily includes, as it stands alone, a principle of hostility to the universe. The parent rises against God for taking away his child.\* The patriot sets his country in array against all the rest of the world. The most extended of all these private affections regards but an infinitely small part of universal being, and is prone to set up the interest of that portion in opposition to the rest. Till they are subdued, and bound, and subjected by religion, they are all as really hostile to the universe as the most contracted selfishness.

Of all these instincts that which most resembles holy love is *humanity*. Yet even here the difference is easily traced. In those operations of humanity which we call *compassion*, men are generally satisfied with relieving the object from *misery*, with little concern for his positive happiness. In

\* If you ascribe this effect to *self-love*, it does not weaken the argument. As far as the parent feels a *personal* calamity, it is because he loved his *child*. Now if you are disposed to put the love of his *child* on a level with the love of *wealth*, and call it a mere personal taste which selfishness loves to gratify, it renders the affection no less hostile. But where the parent fears for the *happiness of the dead*, he certainly mourns for *another* as well as for *himself*. I admit that if *self-love* were subjected he would not murmur; for then his *parental* love would be subjected also. But the two still appear to be distinct grounds of unsubmission.



some cases, (as where an *enemy* suffers.) they do not desire the positive happiness of the object, nor even his complete relief, but only some alleviation of his sufferings. In no case do they wish him the *highest* degree even of earthly prosperity, and during the greatest commotion of their pity would be grieved to know that he was destined one day to outshine themselves. But holy love knows no such limits : it wishes its object the greatest measure of happiness that his capacity will admit.

In cases where humanity desires the *positive* happiness of a *wide extent of society*, it then makes, of all the natural affections, the nearest approaches to universal benevolence. This is the hardest case of all. But even here the difference may be plainly perceived. If in this shape humanity were holy love, it would in all its subjects stand connected with the love of God, and Christ, and the Gospel. But some of its highest actings I have seen in a sweet tempered infidel, who never betrayed any malice except against the Gospel of Christ. Further, if humanity were holy love it would in *all* cases wish its object the *best kind* of happiness, that of communion with God. And lastly, it would take the highest complacency in that benevolence which makes God its centre, and would long to see such a temper universal. But in these three important respects it fails. It acts vigorously in many an infidel without exciting one solitary wish to see men enjoy communion with God, without producing the least complacency in religion, or any

desire for its advancement, without checking a violent opposition to the religion of Christ in every form.

This decisive proof of unholiness lies against *all* these natural principles. You will find them all in violent opposers of God and the Gospel. You might have found them all in the Jews, of whom our Saviour said, that they had both seen and hated both Him and His Father. You might have found them all in Adam immediately after the fall, before he began to be restored by grace, when it will be acknowledged that he was totally depraved. Indeed in a slavish subjection to these and other limited affections, which had raised their objects to the place of God, his whole depravity consisted.

Further, if these principles were holy, we should expect to see the love of God and real godliness prevail *exactly in proportion to their strength*. But so far from this you find most of them stronger in infidels and libertines of mild and generous dispositions, than in some Christians whose tempers are naturally contracted and sour.

It is another conclusive proof of the unholiness of all these principles, that they not only are unaccompanied with the love which the divine law requires, but *have no tendency to produce it*. The instincts, for instance, have no tendency to carry forth the heart to God and His Kingdom, because affections limited *in their very nature* have no tendency to become unlimited. And into no affection but that

of universal benevolence can the love of God enter, because to love God is to be *like Him*, and God is universal love. Though these instincts do indeed lay some restraints on *selfishness*, they do not on the whole diminish the *aggregate strength of the limited affections* which act against God. Of course they have no tendency to *weaken the body of sin*. They may garnish that body; they may vary its forms; but they still leave it in full life. Show me an unsanctified worldling who possesses all these principles in the highest degree, and has cultivated them with the most studious care, and I will show you one who *loves himself* as inordinately as any other sinner, though his pride, and education, and the manners of cultivated society, may have thrown his selfishness into new forms, and drawn over it the vail of good breeding. I will show you one whose *pride* is in full strength, whose *idolatrous love of the world* is not a whit abated, and whose *unbelief* has never opened its eyes. And with these four grand sins of a depraved soul in full vigour, what has he gained in point of real sanctification by all his natural principles? A little paring and polishing of the extremities, but the pulse of sin still beats strong at the heart. The most that he can boast of is love to *man*. But is even that love such as the divine law requires? No, the love contemplated in the Second Table, far from being natural is “the fruit of the Spirit,” the offspring of *regenerating grace*. “Beloved, let us love *one another*, for love is of

God, and *every* one that *loveth* is *born of God*, and knoweth God." "We know that we have *passed from death unto life* because we *love the brethren*." "By this we know that we love the *children of God*, when we love *God* and keep *His commandments*."\* So long as men retain "the carnal mind" of "enmity against God," they have no true charity to men, not even to good men. In every point of view they fall short of that "love" which "is the *fulfilling* of the law." And this wanting, what are all their natural affections? This wanting, *miraculous powers* are nothing, nothing the consecration of *all their goods to feed the poor*, and of *their bodies to be burned*.† Their inscription still is, *Destitute of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."*

Let the unregenerate hear this! Let the unsanctified think of this! Let it follow them to their closets and their pillows. And O let the peal never cease to ring through their ears, *Destitute of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord"!*

\* Gal. v. 22. 1 John iii. 14. and iv. 7. and v. 2. † 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.

## LECTURE IV.

### SUPREME LOVE OR ENMITY.

MATTHEW VI. 24.

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS ; FOR EITHER HE WILL HATE THE ONE AND LOVE THE OTHER, OR ELSE HE WILL HOLD TO THE ONE AND DESPISE THE OTHER : YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON.

IN the last Lecture you saw the doctrine of Total Depravity deduced from the nature of *holiness* ; in this you will see the same truth drawn from the nature of *sin*. From the nature of sin I shall undertake to prove that the mass of men are the *enemies of God* ; and this, as appeared in the foregoing Lecture, amounts to the fullest proof that they are totally depraved.

Our text distinctly affirms that to love another object supremely is to be the enemy of God. “ No man can serve two masters ; ” no man can satisfy two conflicting claims ; no man can be under the *commanding* influence of God and mammon. Either he will *hate* God and love mammon, or he will cleave to God and *despise* mammon. If one is supreme the other must be hated or despised. The

reasoning though applied to *wealth* is not confined to it, the application being intended only to furnish an instance to illustrate what is manifestly laid down as a universal maxim, that "No man can serve two masters," that no man can love two objects severally and imperatively claiming to be supreme. The plain instruction is, that the man who loves *any* creature supremely is the enemy of God. And this is taught expressly by the apostle James: "The *friendship* of the world is *enmity* with God: whosoever therefore will be a *friend* of the world is the *enemy* of God."\*

When I speak of supreme love to the *world*, I mean nothing different from supreme *self-love*. What is self-love? No man feels that *fondness* for his own *person* which he may feel for another. Nothing can be meant by the love of himself but a regard for the *happiness attached to his own consciousness*. Now that happiness can reach his consciousness through no other medium than the *gratification of his tastes and feelings*. Self-love then is a regard for the gratification of one's own tastes and feelings. And what is the love of the *world*? Not a mere *relish* for worldly things, as food, a landscape, a garden, &c. That relish is not indeed self-love, nor is it what the Scriptures mean by the love of the world. The love of the world is a *doting* on worldly things. And why? No man loves these things as he loves beings ca-

\* James iv. 4.

pable of pleasure or pain, with an affection terminating in *them*. He dotes on them, (except so far as he regards them as the means of happiness to *others*.) only as *instruments of his own gratification*, that is, as instruments of his own *happiness*. And to dote on wealth and honour, for instance, as the mere instruments of his own happiness, is not distinct from loving *himself*. All that is sinful then in the love of the world, (except the small portion to be charged to the account of undue *social* affections.) is comprehended in *self-love*. To this principle as the grand root of sin I now wish to draw your attention. The thoughts which I have to suggest on this subject shall be arranged under the following heads :

I. The grand root of sin is inordinate self-love.

II. Every man who is not supremely attached to God, is supremely attached to himself.

III. Supreme self-love necessarily produces enmity to God.—It follows from these principles,

IV. That all men by nature are God's enemies.

I. The grand root of sin is inordinate self-love.

Unless *something* is loved or regarded as desirable, there can be no motive to action, no excitement to feeling, nothing to inflame the passions. The *love* of something therefore must precede every sinful action or emotion. As then holiness radically consists in the love of *universal* being, (as

was shown in the last Lecture,) the root of sin, its opposite, must be found in the exclusive love of a *private circle or object*,—in affections so limited as to set up the interest or gratification of an individual, a family, a country, or a world, in opposition to the interest of God and the universe. Now it is a law of these limited affections that their strength increases as their circles contract. No man loves the world at large as well as he loves his own country, nor his country as well as his family, nor his family as well as himself. Self-love of course becomes the ruling passion, and by far the most productive source of sin. It is obviously this which produces *pride*; and “only by pride cometh contention.”\* Only by pride come therefore the *causes* of contention, viz. *anger, malice, envy, self-will, ambition*, and I may add, the whole family of dependant *vices*. Self-love originates almost all the actions which men have agreed to denominate *crimes*. Self-love, fixing chiefly on the world as the grand instrument of personal gratification, offers all the worship that is paid to the world’s *trinity*, riches, honour, and pleasure. How great a proportion of the sin of man is comprehended in this operation of selfishness, may be estimated from the fact that a single branch of this idolatry, (viz. “the love of money,”) has been pronounced by an apostle “the root of all evil.”† Self-love, while it often acts towards God in gratitude and desires after future happiness, is

\* Prov. xiii. 10.

† 1 Tim. vi. 10.



almost the exclusive source, as will presently appear, of all the enmity that is exercised against Him.

That this principle in its inordinate degrees is the exact opposite of holy love or charity, will be evident from almost any selection you can make from the precepts, prohibitions, or didactic parts of Scripture. The following texts, selected almost at random, will be sufficient for the purpose.\*

THE DISINTERESTEDNESS AND  
SELF-DENIAL OF HOLY LOVE.

“Charity—seeketh not  
*her own.*”

“If any man will come  
after me, let him *deny him-  
self* and take up his cross.”

“If thou turn away—from  
doing *thy pleasure* on my holy  
day,—not doing *thine own*  
ways, nor finding *thine own*  
*pleasure*,—then—I will—feed  
thee.”

THE BIAS OF SIN TOWARDS  
ONE’S OWN INTEREST.

“Men shall be lovers of  
*their own selves.*”

“Who have said,—our  
lips are *our own*, who is lord  
over *us*? “My river is *my*  
*own*, and *I* have made it for  
*myself.*”

“How can ye believe  
which receive *honour* one of  
another?”

\* Some of the texts in the left column are quoted only to show how constantly the divine Spirit espouses the part of others against *self*, by appealing to what we ourselves have done against others, or what mercy we ourselves need from others, or by insisting that our regard for others should be measured by the claims which we make on them. In the right column several texts are inserted merely to show how many *different sorts* of sin may at first sight, or by a moment’s reflection, be traced to this source.

“Whosoever will *lose his life* for my sake shall find it.”

“Let no man seek *his own*, but every man *another's* wealth.” “Look not every man on *his own* things, but every man also on the things of *others*.”

“As ye would that men should do to *you*, do ye also to them likewise.” “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*.”

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to *please ourselves*. Let every one of us *please his neighbour* for his good to edification; for even Christ *pleased not Himself*.” “If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering *thyself*, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” “Take no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that *thou thyself likewise hast cursed others*.”

“Whosoever will *save his life* shall lose it.”

“All seek *their own*, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.” “They—serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but *their own belly*.”

“If ye were of the world the world would love *his own*; but because ye are not of the world,—therefore the world hateth you.”

“Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy *brother's* eye, and considerest not the beam that is in *thine own* eye?” “Wherein thou judgest *another* thou condemnest *thyself*.—Thou—art confident that *thou thyself* art a guide of the blind—an instructor of the foolish.—Thou therefore which teachest *another*, teachest thou not *thyself*? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost *thou* steal?”

“Avenge not *yourselves*, but rather give place unto wrath.” “Recompense no man evil for evil.” “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.” “Love your enemies, do good to them which hate *you*, bless them that curse *you*, and pray for them that despitefully use *you*. And unto him that smiteth thee on the cheek, offer also the other.—For if ye love them which love *you*, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love *them*. And if ye do good to them which do good to *you*, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.”

“If there be—any comfort of *love*,—let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem *other better than themselves*.” “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly *love*, in honour preferring *one another*.” “Seekest thou great things for *thyself*? Seek them not.” “Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in *your own conceits*.” “For I say—to every man—not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your *lusts*? [*selfish covetings*, according to that explanation, “I had not known *lust* except the law had said, Thou shalt not *covet*.”]—Ye *lust* and *have* not; ye kill, and *desire to have*, and cannot *obtain*; ye fight, and war, and yet ye *have* not.”

“Only by *pride* cometh contention” [The *selfishness* of pride is apparent to all.] “He that is of a *proud* heart stirreth up strife.” “*Desirous of vain glory*, provoking one another, envying one another.” “Presumptuous are they, *self-willed*, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” “Ye are they which justify *yourselves* before men.” “I have spread out my hands all day unto a rebellious people,—which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to *me*, for I am

to think." "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in *ourselves* but in God." "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto *thine own* understanding.—Be not wise in *thine own eyes*." "Charity *vaunteth not* itself, is not *puffed up*."

"We preach *not ourselves*, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake." "Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also *our own souls*, because ye were dear unto us."

"Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?—he that sweareth to *his own hurt* and changeth not."

"Render—to all their *dues*; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom.—Owe no man any thing but to love one another."

"Him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take

holier than *thou*." "Thou hast done foolishly in lifting up *thyself*." "Be not righteous overmuch, neither make *thyself* overwise."

"Some indeed preach Christ even of *envy* and *strife*.—The one preach Christ of *contention*,—the other of *love*." "He that is a *hireling*,—*whose own* the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth."

"Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly *supplant*, and every neighbour will walk with *slanders*. And they will *deceive* every one his neighbour, and will not *speak the truth*."

"The *balances of deceit* are in his hand; he loveth *oppression*."

"There is utterly a fault among you because ye go to

thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.— If you lend to them of whom ye *hope to receive*, what thank have ye ? for sinners also lend to sinners to *receive as much again*. But—do good and lend, *hoping for nothing again*.”

“Use *hospitality* one to another *without grudging*.”

“Sell that ye have and *give alms*.” “Remember—them which suffer adversity, as being *yourselves* also in the body.”

*law* one with another. Why do ye not rather *take wrong* ? Why do ye not rather suffer *yourselves* to be defrauded ? Nay ye do wrong and *defraud*, and that your brethren.”

“They murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto *us* which have borne the burden and heat of the day.”

“Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan—which *oppress the poor*.”\*

These passages, and numberless others which might be selected, manifestly take it for granted that the controversy lies between a man's own self

\* Ps. xii. 4. and xv. 1, 4. Prov. iii. 5, 7. and xiii. 10. and xxviii. 25. and xxx. 32. Eccl. vii. 16, 21, 22. Isai. lviii. 13, 14. and lxxv. 2, 5. Jer. ix. 4, 5. and xlv. 5. Ezek. xxix. 3. Hos. xii. 7. Amos iv. 1. Mat. vii. 3. and xvi. 24, 25. and xx. 11, 12. Luke vi. 27—37. and xii. 33. and xvi. 15. John x. 12. and xv. 19. Rom. ii. 1, 17—23. and vii. 7. and xii. 3, 10, 16, 19. and xiii. 7, 8. and xv. 1—3. and xvi. 18. 1 Cor. vi. 7, 8. and x. 24. and xiii. 4, 5. 2 Cor. i. 9. and iv. 5. Gal. v. 14, 26. and vi. 1, 2. Phil. i. 15—17. and ii. 1, 3, 4, 21. 1 Thes. ii. 8. 2 Tim. iii. 2. Heb. xiii. 3. James iv. 1, 2. 1 Pet. iv. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 10.

and all beings beyond him, and to an eye that closely inspects them render it sufficiently evident that self-denial lies at the foundation of all holiness, and that the great root of sin is inordinate self-love.

II. Every man who is not supremely attached to God, is supremely attached to himself.

Every man has some *one* object of *supreme* regard. This will probably not be denied. It will hardly be pretended that among the objects in highest esteem there are several which hold exactly an equal rank. Every man has his *ruling passion*; every man has his *god*; every man has his "*master*." But "*no man can serve two masters*." I assume then that every man has some one object of supreme regard. But in the universe there are but two that can possibly rise to this rank, *God* and *self*. Where can you find a third? Is it the *world*? But all inordinate love of the world is comprehended in *self-love*, as has been already shown. Where then can you find the third? If there were a third it must be some *fellow creature*, or *community* of creatures. But no man ever loved his fellow creatures supremely. The social affections may restrain selfishness, but cannot dethrone self. Wherever one's essential interest in *both* worlds comes in competition with that of others, self-love and not the social affections will prevail. For the proof of this I confidently appeal to every man's consciousness, and am willing to rest my cause there without further argument.

It may then be adopted as an incontrovertible maxim, that every man makes either God or himself his supreme object.\*

\* There are some who disown the distinction between *selfish* and *disinterested* affections; and others, who while they admit the distinction, maintain that all men love themselves supremely, (that is, desire their own happiness more than any thing else,) and that the only difference between a good and a bad man is, that one *places his happiness* in *right* things, the other in *wrong*. In answer to the first class, I freely concede that in two things all beings agree,—in *following their inclinations*, and in finding their *happiness*, so far as they find it at all, in the *gratification* of their inclinations. But the great difference lies in their *objects*. The object of the selfish man is the gratification of *himself*; the object of the disinterested man, the happiness of *others*. One follows his inclinations for the mere satisfaction which *he* is thence to derive; the other, for the happiness which he hopes to impart to *others*. When you spring to catch a falling child, is it from the *reflection* that *you* must suffer with it, or from *direct* regard to the comfort of the child? Do you wish that your dying friend may *be* happy, or merely that *you may think* he is happy? In laying out a course of benevolent conduct, where the mind has leisure to contemplate *all* the good resulting from its plans, self-love will doubtless take into account the personal satisfaction of doing good. But if self-love stood alone, *whence the satisfaction* of imparting happiness? If I love only myself, why is it a *pleasure* to relieve another? Whence comes the *inclination*? That must be in complete existence before I have any chance to draw personal comfort from its indulgence. It could not be *created* by the reflection that *if* I possessed and indulged it I should be happy. But can it be necessary to employ arguments to prove that we are capable of really *loving another*, and of being gratified by his happiness in itself considered? And this is all that any one means by *disinterested* love.

In reply to the other class, I as freely concede that the difference between a good and a bad man consists in their placing their happiness, the one in right things, the other in wrong. But is it the *right things*, or *his own happiness*, which the good man makes his supreme *object*? This is the question. While the wicked place their whole happiness in gratifying affections which terminate in *themselves* or a *limited circle*, the “right things” in which the good place their highest happiness, (I suppose will not be denied,) are the glory of God and the prosperity

III. Supreme self-love necessarily produces enmity to God.

The simple reason is that God is opposed to this idolatry, and requires upon pain of eternal death that universal love which will fix the heart supremely on Himself. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,*—and thy neighbour *as thyself*.”\* *thyself* then only *as thy neighbour*. If supreme love to your neighbour is not allowed, neither is supreme love to yourself. But is your neighbour to be loved with *all the heart, and soul, and mind*? That love is reserved for God. And it is *supreme*, unless one, at the same moment that he thus loves God, can love another object with *more than all* the heart, and soul, and mind. Thus speaks the *Law*, and sanctions the precept with all its curses. And what says the *Gospel*? “If any

of His kingdom. Now I ask, is the satisfaction which they hope to derive to *themselves* from that good, or *the good itself*, their supreme *object*? Do they rejoice more in the reflection that *they*, (rather than others,) shall *enjoy* the sight of God’s glory, than that God will be glorified? If so, they no longer place their supreme happiness in His glory, but in their own gratification,—a gratification more refined indeed than the grosser pleasures of sense, but still personal and private. To say that they place their supreme happiness in the glory of God, and yet make their own happiness the highest object, is a plain contradiction. For to place their supreme happiness in the glory of God, necessarily implies that they love and value His glory more than any other object. I love that most in which I place my highest delight. How comes it to pass that the glory of God gives me the greatest satisfaction, unless I love it most? And if I *love* it most, I *seek* it most. And if I love and seek it most, I make it my supreme *object*.

\* Mat. xxii. 37—39.



man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his *own life* also, *he cannot be my disciple.*"\* By the consent then of both Law and Gospel, all are consigned to eternal death who do not love God supremely.

This it is which rouses the war. Supreme selfishness cannot but be the eternal enemy of a God who makes such demands, and enforces them with such penalties; because the demands and sanctions crush and destroy all its dearest interests. Here lies the main ground of hostility. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, FOR [*because*] it is not subject to the LAW of God, neither indeed can be."† A moral Governour, who has never been revealed but in the attitude of standing with a drawn sword between the sinner and his idols, and saying, 'Touch that idol and you die, cannot but be hated by a supremely selfish heart. Since the world began was it ever known that one stood full in the way of another's *supreme* object, and was not hated? The man that idolizes himself and the instruments of his own gratification, cannot but hate the divine holiness, because the whole strength of that perfection acts directly against him. The whole exhibition of that perfection consists in the prohibition and punishment of this idolatry,—in the voice that sounds through heaven and earth, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;"

\* Luke xiv. 26.

† Rom. viii. 7.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,—and thy neighbour as thyself,” or suffer eternal pain. Remove that prohibition and punishment, and you cover from creatures every trace of the divine holiness. Against the man then who supremely loves himself, the whole strength of the divine holiness exclusively acts; against all the holiness of God, (indeed against His whole *authority*,) acts the man whose heart centres in himself. What but enmity and eternal war can subsist in such a case?

But you say, I certainly can love another object while I love myself supremely. You *can*, where that object does not interfere with self-love by essentially opposing your own interest. But you ask, Can I not love an earthly parent *some* while I love myself *more*? No,—if that parent unchangeably declares, I will treat you as an enemy forever unless you love me supremely; do this or die;—if he follows you wherever you go, and fills your ears with this sound from morning to night, and from month to month,—if every gift which he puts into your hand is accompanied with this declaration,—and especially if *his character is all of a piece*. Your *deaf* and *forgetful* brother, who is unconscious of his father’s law and character, may love his *gifts*, and feel some gratitude to the giver; but *you*, as certainly as you love yourself supremely, can never love such a parent, but must feel the strongest enmity against him. But you say, I could exercise some love towards him if I was con-

vinced that His law was *just*. What, love justice *against yourself*, and yet be supremely selfish! If your own interest is paramount in your *affections* to all other considerations, what *can* induce you to love that justice which destroys your interest? That you might love the justice if it were not *against you*, I do not deny. I have admitted that sinners would not hate God if His law were not against them. It of course happens that they who have expunged from their creed all intimations of punishment, find no difficulty in loving the god which their fancies have formed. The enmity of sinners is not disinterested but selfish, as it must be if it arises from inordinate self-love. But did you ever know a *selfish* man who loved the *law* that *condemned him*? or loved the *law-giver*, whose *whole character* was transfused into the law, and who was himself the *executioner*?

Love the justice which condemns you! Do you consider where you stand? You have now taken the ground of *disinterested and holy love*. And what, I pray, can prevent *that* affection from fixing supremely on God? There is more in Him to please and gratify such an affection than in the universe besides. Do you say, That affection will indeed love God more than the *same affection* will love any thing else, but it is weak, and self-love is strong and has predominating influence? The question then comes to this, Whether an affection which delights in God above all things, can exist in a soul that is under the governing influence of selfishness, and of course under the governing influence of en-

mity to God. Now did you ever find a mind balanced after this sort? Did you ever find a mind *governed* by enmity against a *man* of a uniform and consistent character, and at the same time possessed of an affection which loved his *whole* character more than any other object, more than even *self*? Such a phenomenon has never appeared in the moral or social world, and the fancy which created it is only a dream. It is apparent then that there cannot be a particle of disinterested and holy love which does not fix *supremely* on God, (whenever the mind has a distinct view of Him,) nor a particle of love to God, which, (under the same circumstances,) does not *govern* the soul; and that where self-love predominates, (in a fair view of all the objects which solicit regard,) enmity to God must exist, must prevail, and exclude every better affection towards Him. No affection but that of universal love will truly fix on God; but how can universal love exist in a heart that would sacrifice the universe to serve a private end?

I have one more question on this subject. If supreme selfishness is not sufficient to produce enmity to God, pray *what ever did produce it in any mind*? What greater cause ever produced it in wicked men or devils? Nothing worse existed in Cain or Judas, nothing worse can be found in hell.

IV. It follows from these principles that all men by nature are the enemies of God.

Independently of these reasonings it might be concluded that if there is any such thing in the world as “the *fleshly* mind” which “is *enmity* a-

gainst God," it must belong to *every one* that is "born of the flesh," for "that which is born of the flesh is *flesh*" in *every instance*; that if there is any such thing in the world as "the *natural man*" who regards "the things of the Spirit of God" as "foolishness," it must be *every man* as he is formed by *nature*.<sup>\*</sup> But I have heard it said that though mankind were thus depraved as they stood connected with the first Adam, they were in some degree restored by Christ, and in this restored state are born into the world. Now if what has been said under the preceding heads is true, this question is fairly laid to rest. None are in fact raised above the character of *enemies of God* but they who are restored to *supreme love*. After all that Christ has done the world are still divided into two classes, they who *hate* God, and they who love Him *supremely*. All who are not restored to the temper of real Christians and martyrs, are settled in enmity against Him, without one solitary emotion of love. And what were they ever worse than this even in the eye of law? What worse character does any evangelical minister ascribe to "the *fleshy mind*," as it now is, or as it ever was? Until therefore you prove, in opposition to the whole tenour of revelation and experience, that *all the world* are *supremely* attached to the true God, you must admit that some are not raised a whit above their original pollution.

Again I have heard it said that "the *natural man*" is a *heathen*, and that the *Regeneration* which our Saviour pronounced so necessary for

<sup>\*</sup> John iii. 6. Rom viii. 7. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

admission to His kingdom,\* is only a turning from paganism. This by the way would fairly exclude every heathen on earth from salvation,—an inference not very acceptable to the generality of those who would fritter down Regeneration to this. It may also be a matter of wonder to some that a Jewish ruler should have heard with so much astonishment that pagans must be converted to the revealed faith. But let that pass. I ask whether there are none in Christian countries who are under the supreme dominion of self-love? none with an historick faith who serve “the creature more than the Creator?” none that belong to the Church who love “the praise of men more than the praise of God”? none who cover even with canonicals a heart supremely attached to the world? If these you find, you find all the attributes of “the fleshly mind” within the pale of the Christian Church. Why then go to pagan countries to seek “the natural man”? The whole population of Christendom are enemies of God, with the bare exception of those who love Him *supremely*. And if of all that population *none* love Him *better than life* till “the love of God is shed abroad in [their] hearts *by the Holy Ghost*,”† then *none* of the inhabitants of Christendom, as they are *born into the world*, possess any other temper than that of God’s enemies.

Thus I have finished what was proposed. And now may we not all find sufficient reason to lay our hands on our hearts? We may often have seen sin in ourselves without knowing it, and may have promoted the deception by calling it by another

\* John iii. 3, 5.

† Rom. v. 5.

name; and while restrained from actual crimes, we may have wondered at the strong charges of the divine Word against us. But if *every undue bias in our own favour* contains in itself the grand principle of all rebellion against God, we need only watch our hearts for a single hour to find reason enough to exclaim with distress and amazement, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint!" In the strong workings of this polluted principle we may discover the deep and dreadful malignity of sin; and our wonder that we are thus charged, will soon yield to greater wonder that we are out of everlasting despair. What reason for humility and self-loathing! for shame, and grief, and tears!

If *supreme attachment to the creature is itself Total Depravity*, I tremble as I inquire how many of my hearers are still totally depraved. Should an angel pass from seat to seat with a commission to take the account, how many of you would he find supremely attached to the world? how many, more anxious for the success of their commercial pursuits, than for the interest of the Church and the glory of God? how many, more enamoured of amusements than prayer? how many, more eager to exalt themselves than the Saviour of the world? Precisely that number he would write down *totally depraved*, and God would approve the record.

My dear hearers, *do you love God?* Do you love the God that made and redeemed you,—the God of infinite and eternal love,—the treasure and glory of the universe? All heaven is full of exultation and transport that such a God exists. and do

*you love Him ? Without that love you are wretches to eternity in whatever world you dwell. Without that love you are wretches on the highest throne in glory. You are pressed with infinite obligations, and do you love that God ? Let the question reach every part of the house, and ring through every conscience, Do you love the ever-blessed God ? Love Him ! we should be monsters if we did not love Him. Amen to that,—but do you really love Him ? Do you love Him better than father or mother, wife or children, houses or lands, or life itself ? That we cannot say. Then, my dear hearers, you have not a particle of love to God in your hearts. Nay more,—how shall I utter the dreadful charge !—You are His enemies. Enemies of God ! In what world am I ? I see not the chains and bars around me—am I in the world that was once wet with a Saviour's blood ? am I in an assembly of people for whom He died ? Enemies of God ! Why what evil hath He done ? If you are resolved to remain His foes I will follow you with this moving entreaty till I die, Why what evil hath He done ? Is it for the love that gave being to numberless worlds, and feeds them all from the stores of His bounty ? Is it for the love that sent His only Son to expire on a cross ? Is it for the compassion that cries after you from year to year ? But I have done. When it shall be told another day that redeemed sinners were enemies of God,—I had almost said,—all heaven will be in tears !*



## LECTURE V.

### REGENERATION NOT PROGRESSIVE.

EZEKIEL XI. 19.

I WILL PUT A NEW SPIRIT WITHIN YOU ; AND I WILL TAKE THE STONE  
HEART OUT OF THEIR FLESH, AND WILL GIVE THEM A HEART OF  
FLESH.

THERE is a phenomenon in the moral world for which no adequate natural cause has ever yet been assigned. I mean a great and sudden change of temper and character, brought about under a strong impression of scriptural truths ; a change in many cases from habitual vice and malignity to the sweetness and purity of the Christian spirit, and continuing to manifest itself in a new character through life, accompanied, if you will believe the subjects, with new views of God, and Christ, and divine things in general, and with new feelings towards them. This change is discovered in people of all temperaments ; in the phlegmatick as well as the ardent, in the slow and cautious as well as the impetuous and sanguine, in minds wholly subject to the understanding as well as those which

yield more to the dominion of the imagination. It takes place in people of all ranks and conditions; in the wise and learned as well as the simple and ignorant, in persons insulated by society of a different cast, and strongly prejudiced against the belief of such a change. Thousands who are not mad, but cool, dispassionate, and wise, the ornaments of society and of learning, whose word would be taken in any other case, and who certainly ought to be regarded as competent judges, tell you that they have had opportunity to *see both sides*, as the revilers of this doctrine have not; that they once looked upon the subject with the eyes of their opponents, but have since seen for themselves, and do assuredly know that there is such a thing as a spiritual change of heart. And what witnesses can you oppose to these? Men who have nothing to offer but mere *negative* testimony,—who can only say, they know of no such thing.

To this interesting change, as the SECOND grand topick of the Course, I am now to draw your attention. But as the reasonings on this point will be founded on truths already established, it is necessary to lay these truths before you again and at one view. It has been proved that holiness radically consists in universal love which fixes the heart supremely on God; that sin has its root in affections limited to a private circle, but chiefly in selfishness, including as a main part the love of the world; that every man makes either God or himself the object of his chief regard; that su-

preme self-love necessarily produces enmity to God, to the utter exclusion of every better affection towards Him; that they who do not love God supremely are destitute of true charity to *man*, and altogether without holiness; that this is the native character of all who are born into the world, whether in pagan or Christian countries.

Out of these truths arises the necessity of that moral change which is denominated Regeneration. The reason of this necessity is here laid open to the core, and proves to be the same that our Saviour assigned to the wondering Nicodemus. He had astonished that Jewish ruler with the solemn asseveration, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and while the Jew stood doubting and amazed, He added, as the sole ground of this necessity, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;"\* in other words, that which is born by natural generation is "carnal," is "enmity against God," and must be born again.

These truths disclose also the precise *nature* of the change which is necessary. It is a transition from supreme selfishness to universal love,—from enmity against God to supreme attachment to Him. Of course it must be the greatest change that ever takes place in the human affections.

The first question that arises on the subject is, *Whether Regeneration is progressive or instantaneous.* I shall attempt to prove from the truths

\* John iii. 3. 6.

already established and from other considerations that it must be *instantaneous*. It is not necessary however to suppose that the precise time is always *known*. Conceive of a man sitting in a dungeon, so occupied in thought as not to notice the change which is gradually produced by a light approaching at a distance. At length turning his eye he discerns objects, and perceives that light has been admitted into the room; but when it began to enter he cannot tell. Still there was a moment when the first ray passed the casement. So in the present case, the *evidence* of the change may be earlier or later in its appearance, and more or less rapid in its developement, but the change itself is always instantaneous. Is not such an idea more than implied in the text? What is the blessing promised? Not the *gradual* improvement of an *old* temper, but “a *new* spirit;”—“the stony heart” not softened *by degrees* into flesh, but by one decisive effort removed and a heart of flesh substituted in its room.

You are told by some that no other change is necessary than what is accomplished by reason, *gradually* resuming its empire over the appetites and passions. But this theory entirely overlooks the *enmity of heart* that refuses to yield to reason. It arrays its ethicks against the grosser ebullitions of sin, but leaves the seat of the disorder untouched. You are told by others that through the influence of instruction, example, one’s own exertions, and the common operations of the Spirit, the enmity is gradually weakened till it is destroyed, and

the taste of the mind, as in many other cases, is brought over by degrees from aversion to love. But does not this, and every other theory which recognises the principle of progressive Regeneration, wholly overlook the nature of the disease, and the real ground of the native enmity? The disease is supreme self-love; the ground of enmity, that God requires upon penalty of eternal death that universal love which will fix the heart supremely on Himself. This enmity will remain and exclude every particle of love, as long as self-love is supreme. Now self-love will remain supreme till the chief regard is transferred to another object. But in the universe there is not another object to receive it but God Himself. Self-love then will remain supreme, and support the enmity in all its vigour, till God is supremely loved. As long as the sinner loves himself chiefly he is the enemy of God, to the utter exclusion of every better affection towards Him; the moment he ceases to love himself supremely his highest affection centres in God. There is no intermediate space. No time can elapse between the last moment in which he loves himself supremely, and the first moment in which he does not.

You talk of the taste's being brought over by a gradual process from enmity to love; but can you find any step in that process at which the man does not either love the *world* better than God, or God better than the world? If he loves the world better than God he has made no progress at all; for "if any man love the world *the love of the Father is not*

*in him :*" and if no love, there must be enmity: "He that is not *with me is against me.*" "The *friendship* of the world is *enmity* with God; whosoever therefore will be a *friend* of the world is the *enemy* of God." "Either he will *hate* the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and *despise* the other."\* On the other hand, if he loves God better than the world Regeneration is consummated, and there is no room for progress. Either then he has made no advance or the work is complete. In every step of the supposed progress he is either an enemy to God or loves Him supremely.

Yielding then the point that the man is an enemy to God till the change is complete, it may yet be asked, is not that enmity *gradually weakened*? It cannot be *radically* weakened till its *cause* is weakened, which is supreme self-love, (or more generally the love of *the creature*, for the *social* affections too may set up their objects in opposition.) struggling against the law and administration of God. But the love of the creature, (in which self-love is included,) cannot be weakened before the love of God is introduced. What is there to weaken it? If the heart is taken from the creature, it must be set on *another* object or be *annihilated*. But there is no other object except God Himself. Before the love of God therefore is implanted there is no way radically to weaken the enmity, but to weaken all the affections and reduce the soul near-

\* Mat. vi. 24. and xii. 30. James iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15.

er to a state of insensibility. And even then the love of the creature, (the sole cause of the hostility,) would exert as absolute a *dominion* as before, only over a weaker subject. Particular lusts may be absorbed in others, but the current of sin is only turned into new channels. The passions may be more or less inflamed, and thus the *actings* of self-love more or less *violent*. By this means one may sin with a stronger hand than another of equal capacity. Again the passions may be allayed, and less guilt be incurred in an equal time; but the supreme love of the creature, which is the preparation in the soul for the future rage of all these passions, cannot be abated, (at least its *dominion* cannot be reduced,) but by that heavenly charity which fixes the heart supremely on God.

But you ask, May not new *light* thrown upon the conscience convince the mind of the *unreasonableness* of its opposition, and thus sooth and allay its enmity? I answer: by reasoning you may compose the passions of an angry man without at all changing his disposition. After you have succeeded in calming the risings of enmity against God, I ask, *is the dominion of the limited affections in the least abated?* This is the decisive question: for supreme attachment to the creature comprehends the root and essence of the whole disease. Now can you weaken the love of the creature *by light*? Or to confine the question to a part of the evil, can you by light and conscience weaken the power of *self-love*? Can you reason a man out of his at-

tachment to himself? Will all the light of the Last Day abate in the least the selfishness of the wicked? Will not light and conscience in their highest degrees act together in the regions of despair, without producing any other effect than rage and gnashing of teeth? No but the *living*, you say, possess *hope*. Hope! and can you then *bribe* a man to be *less selfish*? What, bribe a man to *hate a bribe*? If enmity against God were only a *prejudice* arising from a misconception of His true character, it might indeed be removed by light. In that case it would not be a sin but a virtue; for to hate a *false* image of God, in other words, a false *God*, is a duty. But if the *heart* of sinners is depraved, if they hate the *true* character of God in whatever form it appears, they will hate it the more the more it is seen, and light, so far from abating, will only rouse the enmity to stronger action. You may convince them of the *justice* of the divine administration; (that indeed will not rouse their enmity;) but while they love their own interest supremely, what *can* abate their hatred of a law which says, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God supremely, or suffer eternal pain? Can the love of private interest regard more favourably the destruction of that interest because the destruction is just? And can self-love hold dominion and actually *govern* the heart, and not controul every consideration suggested by conscience to oppose its power? without continuing to array the whole heart against the absolute destroyer of self-interest? In a word, can supreme



love to one's own interest radically hate either more or less than it actually does, the destruction of that interest, or any arrangement for its destruction, while the capacity of the soul remains the same?

But you say again, May not the divine *Spirit*, before the love of God is implanted, bring the mind to a better frame by weakening its prejudices against religion, and exciting reflections, desires, and resolutions which come nearer to a holy character? All that the Spirit does before Regeneration, I suppose, is to pour *light* upon the mind; thus awakening remorse of conscience, alarming self-love, and occasioning various and strong actings of this principle. If this is all that the Spirit does before Regeneration, the question has been already answered in what was said of the influence of *light*. But whatever the Spirit does He certainly does not perform impossibilities. If in the nature of things nothing *can* weaken the enmity that does not first dethrone the love of the creature, and if nothing can dethrone that despot but the love of God, then no operation of the Spirit which does not introduce the love of God, can weaken the empire of depravity. But I have another thing to say. The feelings of the convicted are holy, or sinful, or neither. If neither, they have no moral nature, that is, are deserving neither of praise or blame from the moral Governour of the world, and of course have nothing to do with our subject. If they are sinful, what approaches, I pray, can sin

make to *holiness*? to the *lowest* degree of holiness? What approaches can total *darkness* make to the lowest degree of *light*? or total *deadness* to the lowest degree of *life*? Will you say then that they are *holy*? What, holy without love to God! without a particle of that “love” which “is the *fulfilling* of the law,” which includes the whole that the law requires! What says the apostle? “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not *love*, I am become as *sounding brass* or a *tinkling cymbal*. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have no *love*, I am NOTHING. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not *love*, it profiteth me nothing.”\* Will you say then that the convicted sinner *has* some love to God though it is *not supreme*? What, while the *enmity* remains? while the *enmity prevails*? for prevail it must while he loves himself supremely,—prevail it must therefore till his supreme affection is transferred to God. But once for all let an apostle decide whether any love to God can exist while the heart is supremely attached to another: “If any man love the world *the love of the Father is not in him*.”†

In every view then it appears that there can be no approaches towards Regeneration in the antecedent temper of the heart. The moment before

\* Rom. xiii. 10. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.

† 1 John ii. 15.

the change the sinner is as far from sanctification as darkness is from light, as death is from life, as sin is from holiness. Admitting that his passions are somewhat allayed, and the *actings* of self-love not equally *violent*, (a concession by no means to be made, certainly not in every case, considering the strong light in which he views the objects of his aversion and dread,) still the *least* action of enmity to God is as far removed from the lowest degree of holiness, as an object which God *infinitely hates*, from an object which He *infinitely loves*,—as far as a thing which deserves everlasting shame and contempt, from a grace that will receive endless and inconceivable rewards. And the two can never be brought nearer together.

I have now finished one train of reasoning and will enter on another. I prove that Regeneration is instantaneous from the established truth that mankind by nature are destitute of holiness. Regeneration is nothing more nor less than the *commencement* of holiness in the soul,—the *increase* of that principle being not Regeneration but sanctification. If the soul is wholly destitute of holiness there must be a moment when it first receives that principle, provided the principle itself is specifically different from any thing preexisting in the mind, and is not a *compound* gradually formed out of the natural affections. Even in that case there would be a moment when by *increase*, or by a *perfect process of combination*, it would first become entitled to the name of holiness. But not to insist

on that, it is very apparent from what has been said of the nature of holiness, that however multitudinous it may be in its operations and effects, it is not a compound, but a property no less simple in its essence than universal love, and that it is as specifically different from any thing preexisting in the mind, as parental affection is from humanity, or the love of science from the love of food. A property so simple and distinct from all others, may be reasoned upon with as much precision as any of the elementary substances of the chemist. Now the production of a new and simple property, like the power of attraction first communicated to a repellent body, *must* be instantaneous. The *beginning* of a thing, one would think, cannot be progressive.

This idea may be further illustrated by a recurrence to some of the images under which this change is represented. It is set forth by the figure of light struck out in the midst of total darkness: "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our *hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is called the opening of blind eyes, and the unstopping of deaf ears. It is called a resurrection from the dead: "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." It is called a new creation: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "Put on the new man which after God is created

in righteousness and true holiness." It is called the removal of a heart of stone and introduction of a heart of flesh. It is called a new birth.\* Now all these figures import an instantaneous change. There is a moment when the first ray of light enters a region of total darkness. There is a moment when the blind man begins to see. There is a moment when the deaf man hears the first sound. There is a moment when life begins to animate a dead body. The creation of a *simple substance* must be instantaneous. The formation of the various objects that were to compose a *world*, admitted of successive acts; and to this is analogous the new creation of the whole body of the elect in successive generations: but when a simple substance was to be produced, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light."† The removal of a heart of stone and substitution of a heart of flesh, must likewise be instantaneous, or according to the figure there is a time when either there are two hearts or no heart at all. And in regard to a birth, there is a moment in every case in which it may be first said, a child is born into the world.

Regeneration has sometimes been compared to the struggle of *light* with darkness, and the *gradual* prevalence of the former, at the *dawn of day*. But what do they mean by *light*? If they mean *holi-*

\* Ps. cxlvi. 8. Isai. xxix. 18. and xxxv. 5. and xlii. 16--19. and xliii. 3. Ezek. xi. 19. Luke iv. 18. John iii. 3. 2 Cor. iv. 6. and v. 17. Eph. ii. 1, 10. and iv. 24. 2 Pet. i. 9. Rev. iii. 17. † Gen. i. 3.

ness, they assume what has been proved to be false, that there is holiness in the heart before the completion of Regeneration. Show me a man in whom holiness and sin are struggling for dominion, and I will show you one who is already born again. But if they mean any thing *besides holiness*, any thing *besides the identical principle whose prevalence is to constitute the change*, the change itself bears no resemblance to the progress of the morning,—the progress of the same light that makes the day. It might more fitly be compared to the first ray that strikes the eastern horizon, or rather to the first ray that enters a region of *total* darkness. And between the last moment of total darkness, and the first moment of commencing light, no time can elapse. But if by light in this comparison is meant speculative knowledge, and this were even allowed to be the cause of Regeneration, still the change could not be progressive, if any thing more than *ignorance*, if moral depravity is to be removed. No matter by what means the change is accomplished, if it is a transition from supreme selfishness to the supreme love of God, it must be instantaneous according to the reasonings already had.

It affords much support to these reasonings that the Scriptures divide the whole human race into two classes,—saints and sinners, the good and the bad, believers and unbelievers, natural men and spiritual men, those who are *in* Christ and those who are *out*, they who are still under condemnation and they who are justified, the heirs of heaven

and the heirs of hell. There is not a third class. "He that is not *with* me is *against* me."\* At follows that every man, at every moment of his life, belongs to one or the other of these two classes. Then he belongs to one *till the moment* he enters the other. Were it otherwise there would be a time in which he is neither good nor bad, neither *in* Christ nor *out*, neither condemned nor justified, neither an heir of heaven nor an heir of hell. What is he then? To whom does he belong? Whither would he go should he die? Is there a purgatory?

I might add to these reasonings that Regeneration is represented to be a great exhibition of *power*,—as great as the resurrection of Christ: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know—what is *the exceeding greatness of His power* to us-ward who *believe*, according to the working of His *mighty power* which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places."† This certainly favours the idea at least of a *sudden* change. Divine power is doubtless as much *exerted* in the gradual motion of the heavenly bodies, and in the slow process of vegetation, as it was in stopping the sun over Gibeon; but when men are summoned to witness a great *exhibition* of power, they naturally look for a *sudden* effect, as the burst of a volcano, or the sweep of a whirlwind. But if instead of one grand effort Regeneration is

\* Mat. xii. 30.

† Eph. i. 18--20

brought about by a lingering influence, especially if it is produced by the slow operation of *reason* and *knowledge*, it is no more an exhibition of power than the growth of a plant, or the alteration of any of our tastes.

But after all the question chiefly turns on these two points,—the supreme selfishness or total depravity of the human heart, and the nature of holiness. No one who admits this view of the native character, and believes that holiness is a simple principle, not a compound formed out of preexisting properties, can doubt that there is a moment when it is first introduced. *What is the character of the natural heart?* and *What is holiness?* are the two questions which on this subject must divide the world. For if holiness is a simple principle, and first introduced in Regeneration, especially if it is a principle of supreme love to God, following supreme selfishness, nothing can be plainer than that the change is as sudden as the entrance of the first drop that falls into a vessel, or the first ray that penetrates a dungeon.

This doctrine however does not militate against the idea of an *antecedent preparation* in the conscience, wrought by the means of grace, and the enlightening influences of the Spirit. But on this subject I shall have occasion to treat in a future Lecture. At present I shall content myself with two inferences from the doctrine already established.

(1.) It inevitably follows from the foregoing exposition that none of the feelings, or actions, or



duties, (as they are called,) of the unregenerate, so far as they partake of a *moral* nature, that is, so far as they are entitled to praise or blame from the moral Governour of the world, *are otherwise than sinful*. They are sinful, or holy, or neither. If neither, they receive no praise or blame from the moral Governour. For whatever may be said of God in the character of *temporal* head of the Jewish nation, or as accommodating in these days His *visible* dispensations to *visible* characters, yet as *moral Governour* He praises nothing but holiness, or *real* conformity to His *law*, and blames nothing but sin, which “is the transgression of the law.” For to govern ACCORDING TO LAW enters into all our ideas of a righteous Governour. That some of the feelings and actions of the unregenerate are of a neutral character is not denied, but these are to be set aside as of no account. The rest are either sinful or holy. But they are not holy, for the *beginning* of holiness is Regeneration: they must of course be sinful.

It is a credit not denied to the unregenerate that the *form* of their actions is often right; and if the form *by itself* can be supposed to be respected in the divine law, it is as far as it goes real obedience. But is the form so divided by the divine law from the disposition, that standing alone it constitutes any part of obedience? If so the form without the disposition must constitute some part of *transgression*; and then, in the eye of the divine law, a man in part commits murder who kills his neighbour by

accident, or in a paroxysm of madness. The truth is that no action is rewarded or punished by God or man, (unless by God accommodating His *visible* dispensations to the *apprehensions* of mankind,) otherwise than as it is known or supposed to be the index of the heart. Separate from murder all ideas of malicious intent, and it is no longer murder in the eyes of God or man. Separate from prayer all ideas of pious feeling, and in the eyes of God and man it is no longer prayer. No law human or divine ever thought of forbidding a *mad* man to kill his neighbour; (no matter for what reason.) No law human or divine ever thought of requiring a mad man to perform deeds of charity. It is then a *fact* that no law ever forbade or required an external action *but as an expression of mind, of choice, of disposition.* The external action, in its naked form, separate from the choice and disposition, *is not required*, and the action thus alone is no part of obedience, no part of holiness. But if *any thing* in the mind is necessary to impart a holy character to an action, it must be HOLINESS *in the mind*. For certainly nothing but the thing itself can instamp its own character. Where therefore there is no holiness in the heart, there can be, in the view of Him who tries the reins, no holy action.

But while I neglect to ascribe *holiness*, I do not mean to impute *sin*, to the bare form of actions. In strictness of speech the form distinct from the mind no more partakes of a moral nature than the motions of a clock. All that I affirm of the sinfulness of

the actions of the unregenerate is, that *so far* as those actions, considered in both the outward and inward part, partake of a moral nature, they are sinful, and *that* whether the external form is right or wrong. In strictness of speech the sin lies not in the outward form even when that form is wrong, certainly not when it is right. Yet in the popular language of Scripture, as in the common language of mankind, the form and disposition are both comprehended in the action. Now what I assert is, that the action, thus complexly considered, takes its moral character, not from the form, but from the disposition; and where the disposition is wrong, the general action is pronounced sinful. “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” He affectionately approves the widow’s mite, while He rejects the man who without evangelical love bestows all his goods to feed the poor, and then with a martyr’s zeal gives his body to be burned. He accepts “the willing mind” even where no action follows, while He pronounces the very “sacrifice of the wicked—an abomination.” While “a cup of cold water,” administered in love, is rewarded with eternal life, “he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer [is] abomination;” and *that* not merely when he *intends* to mock: “The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination, *how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind.*” Nor let it be supposed that his *sacrifices* are singled out to bear this reproach:

“The *plowing* of the wicked is sin.” His commonest actions are an offence to God, because they proceed from a heart “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” You must cleanse the fountain before the streams can be sweet; you must heal the tree before the fruit can be pleasant. “Make the tree good and his fruit good.” “Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.” Hence those maxims inscribed on the tablet of everlasting truth, “They that are *in the flesh*, [in their natural state,] cannot please God;” and “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.” Without that “faith” which “is the gift of God,” that belief that “Jesus is the Christ” which bespeaks one “born of God,” no action, no prayer is accepted. “If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God:—but let him ask *in faith*, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea:—*for let not that man think that he shall receive ANY THING of the Lord.*” “Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss,” is the common reproof administered to *all* who are supremely attached to the *present world*. “We know that God heareth not sinners.” was a profession of knowledge made even by the Jews.\*

The case is not altered by any convictions which may be excited by the Spirit, by any anxie-

\* 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Prov. xv. 8. and xxi. 4, 37. and xxviii. 9. Jer. xvii. 9. Mat. x. 42. and xii. 33. and xxiii. 26. Mark xii. 42—44. John ix. 31. Rom. viii. 8. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3. 2 Cor. viii. 12. Eph. ii. 8. Heb. xi. 6. James i. 5—7. and iv. 3. 1 John v. 1.

ties of the sinner, by any of his attentions to the means of grace. If Regeneration is the *commencement* of holiness, all the feelings and actions to that moment, so far as they partake of a moral nature, must be sinful. So far as the moral Governour is at all affected, He is only disgusted and offended till the very moment of the change.

(2.) It follows from this view that the unregenerate, even under their highest convictions, and however near they may have approached to the time of their conversion, still lie at the *uncovenanted* mercy of God. By this I do not mean that no promises are held out to them *on condition* of their return; I only mean that nothing which they *now* do has the promise of any reward or notice from God. The moral Governour of the world cannot pledge Himself to reward sinful actions, nor actions barely neutral. A temporal king may consistently engage to recompense actions which have only a fair exterior; but for God to do this, would be to relinquish His right to search the heart. While acting as *temporal* head of the Jewish nation, (an office, however, which He never for a moment stood bound by *promise* to appear in, but occasionally assumed it in sovereign condescension to the weaknesses of the people,) He *visibly* rewarded actions which were good only in the sight of men; (and to present to the eye a continued picture of Himself in His providence, He does the same now;) but He never *promised* that nation a sheaf of barley nor a hin of oil, but on condition of sincere and holy obedience. The follow-

ing passage reveals the *sole* condition, (unless you profanely suppose *two* conditions, like the *two prices* of the petty merchant,) on which all temporal blessings were promised that people : “And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, TO LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD, and to serve Him WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.”\* Indeed the duty of *love to God and man* made so conspicuous a figure in the Mosaic code,† that this condition was necessarily implied in all the promises suspended on general *obedience*.‡ The sum of that code was this : “And now Israel, *what doth the Lord thy God require of thee*, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*.” “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart,—but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”||

There is another insuperable difficulty in the way of extending the promises to the unregenerate; they are not *united to Christ*. The great bond of union is *faith*; but “whosoever believeth—is *born of God*.” “If any man be in Christ he is a *new creature*.” Now it is obvious that none can partake

\* Deut. xi. 13—15. † Deut. vi. 5, 6. and vii. 9. and x. 16, 19. and xi. 1, 13, 22. and xiii. 3. and xix. 9. and xxx. 2, 6, 16, 20. Josh. xxii. 5. and xxiii. 11. ‡ Deut. vi. and xi. and xxviii. and xxx. || Lev. xix. 17, 18. Deut. x. 12.

of the promises but they who are united to Christ; for like the oil on Aaron's head that descended to the skirts of his garments, the promises are *all* poured upon Christ, and descend to His members only. "To Abraham and his Seed were the promises made; He saith not, And to *seeds*, as of many, but as of One, and to thy *Seed, which is Christ*;" "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles *through Jesus Christ*, that we might receive the *promise* of the Spirit *through faith*;" "that the Gentiles should be—partakers of His *promise in Christ*." "*All the promises of God in Him* are yea, and *in Him* amen,"—even in Him who was given "for a *covenant* of the people." "The Scripture hath concluded *all* under sin, that the *promise by faith of Jesus Christ* might be given to them that *believe*."\* How then can any promise reach those who are out of Christ? The promise chiefly contended for is one that is supposed to ensure to the unregenerate an answer to their *prayers*. But if such prayers are answered, it must be *without the influence of Christ*: of course they might have been answered if Christ had never died. Why then did He die?† If *one prayer* of a sinner could ascend to God without going through Christ, a *whole soul* might; and if *one soul* might, a *whole*

\* Isai. xlii. 6. 2 Cor. i. 20. and v. 17. Gal. iii. 14, 16, 22. Eph. iii. 6. 1 John v. 1.

† But the unregenerate, it may be said, do receive numberless blessings *on Christ's account*, that is, in consequence of His having undertaken the work of redemption. Every favour which raises them above the condition of the damned, comes to them in this way. Granted. But there is a material difference between

*world* might. If in *one act* a sinner is accepted without a Saviour, he may be so accepted in his *general character*; and if *one* may, a *whole world* may. Why then was a Saviour provided? But far be such a thought from us. Infinite purity cannot commune with pollution in a single instance, nor look upon a sinner but through a Mediator. What mean you to contend for the privilege of going to God without a Mediator? for the privilege of rushing into a consuming fire? for the privilege of being *pagans*? Presume that a prayer may reach the mercy seat without going through Christ! —if this is not *self-righteousness*, expunge the word from the language. Further, a promise implies a *reward*. Now if the unregenerate are rewarded, they are *rewarded* before they are *pardoned*. 'They receive tokens of favour while they remain objects of

blessings bestowed in *sovereign* mercy, (that is, without any covenant obligation,) merely to put them in possession of the full advantages of probation, and containing no expression of *approbation*, but only of *patience*, and blessings conferred as a *reward*, a *promised* reward, and expressive of the *approbation* of God. Though in *sovereign* mercy God may deal more favourably with sinners than if no chance existed for their salvation, He cannot *approve* of an *unholy* work even for Christ's sake, and cannot, in His secret transactions with the soul, *express* that approbation by a *reward*. For Christ's sake He may accept a *holily* action, which otherwise could not be accepted from a sinner, that is, could not be rewarded with any token of favour; but to accept *unholiness* on Christ's account, is no part of the Gospel plan. It is no part of that plan to accept an act of a sinner on Christ's account without *his own consent* that Christ should be the ground of acceptance, in other words, without his own faith. If then the prayers of those who are not united to Christ by faith, are *approved*, *accepted*, *answered*, *rewarded*, (for all these terms are applicable if one is,) it is not done *on Christ's account*. If such prayers reach the throne of God, they do not ascend through a Mediator.



wrath. And for what are they rewarded? Not for the merits of Christ, (for they have no part in Him,) but for their own works,—works too which if not indifferent are positively sinful. This is “confusion worse confounded.” But charge not this confusion upon the *Bible*. From Genesis to Revelation not a promise of such a nature is found. “Ask and ye shall receive,” is indeed said to all; but when you would know the meaning of that condition, the answer is, “ASK IN FAITH, NOTHING WAVERING.” It is said indeed that “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;” but if you have yet to learn what sort of violence is meant, even an Old Testament saint can tell you: “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine *heart* to understanding; yea, if thou *criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding*; if thou seekest her *as silver*, and searchest for her *as for hid treasures*; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” In short all the promises addressed to the unregenerate are summed up in either of the following texts: “Ye shall seek me and find me, *when ye shall search for me WITH ALL YOUR HEART.*” “If—thou shalt seek the Lord thy God thou shalt find Him, *if thou seek Him WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL.*”\*

\* Deut. iv. 29. Prov. ii. 1—5. Jer. xxix. 13. Mat. xi. 12. John xvi. 24. James i. 6.



## LECTURE VI.

### REGENERATION SUPERNATURAL.

PSALM CX. 3.

THY PEOPLE SHALL BE WILLING IN THE DAY OF THY POWER

THIS promise to Christ respecting His future kingdom is very emphatick. It can scarcely be tortured into any other meaning than that His power should be effectually exerted to render His people willing to submit to His empire; not indirectly by presenting to their view His miracles and the destruction of His enemies, and leaving the event to the casual operation of their self-determining power; but by a *conquest* of their wills or hearts through the efficacious influence of His Spirit.

In the last Lecture it was proved that Regeneration is an instantaneous change, from exclusive attachment to the creature, from supreme selfishness, from enmity against God, to universal love which fixes the heart supremely on God; that there is no previous abatement of the enmity or approximation towards a right temper, the heart being at one moment in full possession of its native selfishness and opposition, at the next moment in pos-

session of a principle of supreme love to God,—acquiring thus in an instant a temper which it never possessed before. Here is a phenomenon wholly unlike any other revolution in the moral or social world. How is it to be accounted for? Is it produced by the self-determining power of the human will, or by the power of God? If by God, is it brought about according to the stated operations of nature, or in a supernatural way? If in a supernatural way, is it done on account of any thing previously performed by the sinner, or in any sense by his cooperation? These three questions will form the plan of the present Lecture.

I. Is this change produced by the self-determining power of the human will, or by the power of God? Not by the self-determining power of the will, or heart, (*both* are included in the term as here used,) for the very last act of the will or heart before the change was entirely hostile to God, and the first right act evinces the change to be past. The will was an enemy in the last act before the act of love. Does then the foe instantly create the friend? Does an effort of enmity instantly produce love? Whenever did darkness create light, or death life? Is it credible that the will, while fully opposed to God, should contrive and accomplish so holy and so vast a change in a moment? None will pretend it. No man in his senses ever pleaded for the self-determining power who allowed the change to be so sudden and so great. But I ask again, what could possibly have *induced* the will all at once to make so great

and new an effort? Motives? But the same motives had been resisted for years, and were firmly resisted in the very last act before the change. Now that the will should steadily resist all motives from the beginning, and all at once yield in an instant, without any new inducement, without *any previous consent of its own*;—that love should start up out of enmity in a moment, uncaused but by itself, is altogether incredible, and never was and never will be believed by any rational mind. The moment Regeneration is proved to be an instantaneous change from unabated enmity to supreme love, the argument for the self-determining power is forever ruined.

Nor will any relief be found by seeking an ally for the will in the understanding. Universal experience proves that the understanding cannot controul, much less create, the affections. If it could, every man would be sure to do as well as he knows how. If it could, the enmity of the natural heart would be chargeable only to ignorance, and then the enmity would not be directed against the *true* God, but against a *false* image of God which it is every man's duty to hate. These faculties of the mind have indeed some controul over each other, but by no means enough to support such an hypothesis. Their empires are very distinct, and divide a man as it were against himself. In its turn the understanding will not submit to the heart. Whoever set himself down to any mental effort, for instance to write a composition, without feeling the

uncertainty whether his intellect would obey his wishes? The will has to stand and solicit, and is often held in suspense whether its suit will be favoured or denied. Hence the fancy of the poets about *courting the Muses*. Could the heart controul the understanding, who would not at once make himself a Newton? And it is only an equal law of nature that the understanding should not controul the heart. If it could, who would not speedily rid himself of many uncomfortable passions? If it could, which of you would not become a Christian at once?

The theory of the self-determining power being thus set aside, those systems which have been built upon it sink of course. These systems may all be reduced to three; the Pelagian, Arminian, and Semi-Arminian. I will spend a moment in spreading these out by the side of the Calvinistick doctrine, that you may distinctly see in what points they differ.

The *Pelagian* theory is, that God does no more than present motives to the mind by the external light of truth: to these the will in the exercise of its self-determining power yields or refuses to yield, and the good man alone makes himself to differ from others who possess equal means of information. This system wholly sets aside the influences of the divine Spirit.

The *Arminian* theory is precisely the same, only it acknowledges the *enlightening* influence of the Spirit as an auxiliary in setting motives before the mind. To these motives the will in the exercise

of its self-determining power yields or refuses to yield, and the good man alone makes himself to differ from others who enjoy *common grace*.

The *Semi-Arminian* theory differs from the latter only in name, and in a greater confusion of language. According to this system God affords a portion of spiritual *aid*, producing something *more than light*, and something *less than holiness*. If that aid is improved He will afford *more*, and so on till the change is complete. This undefinable influence between an enlightening and a sanctifying one, the mind, *though utterly destitute of "true holiness,"* is capable of improving so as to meet with *divine approbation*, and in *reward* to receive more; but it is capable, by the self-determining power of the will which that influence does not controul, of misimproving the grace, and so losing the effect. God really does more for one than another, because one has better improved His grace, *though with an unholy heart*; but He would do as much for one as another if all would improve alike. The real difference is made, not by discriminating grace, but by one's improving divine influence better than another, through the self-determining power of the will which that influence did not controul. This theory rests its weight on three columns; the self-determining power, progressive Regeneration, and the dogma that God approves of unholy deeds; all which I persuade myself have been proved to be but shadows.

Men go through life the dupes of *names*. I beg to know what *can* be meant by an influence which

produces something more than light, and something less than holiness? Does it enlarge the understanding? Does it strengthen the memory? And if it did, what then? What has an enlargement of *natural* powers to do with a change of heart? Satan in *natural* powers surpasses any saint on earth. But of a *moral* tendency what other influence *can* there be, than that which informs the conscience or improves the heart? in other words, than that which *enlightens* or *sanctifies*? Do you say it is an influence which would lead to *holiness* if the *will did not resist*? But what other can that be than an *enlightening* influence? Come fix a microscopick eye on this single point. What influence can you conceive of between that which presents motives to the will, leaving it unconstrained, and that which bends the will by constraining power? \* Do you say there may be a pressure of power which the will resists? But upon your principle what *right* has power to encroach upon the freedom of the will by undertaking to *compel* it? If I have no right to bring a man by force to the house of God, I have no right to exert the least muscular strength upon him, or to assail him in any other way than by *motives*. But *who knows* that such a pressure is made if no effect follows? Who can be conscious of a divine influence but by the effect? But if there is an effect, what effect? What effect pressing in the direction of holiness? Do you say there is thoughtfulness, solem-

\* For an explanation and vindication of such expressions, see Note to page 145.



nity, and distress? But these are only natural effects of light carried home to the conscience. Do you say it removes prejudice? But how except by *light*, since it leaves the *heart* unaltered? Do you say it restrains from passion and sin? But how except by *motives*, (and by regulating perhaps the tone of the *body*, and the disposition of *outward* circumstances,) if the *heart* remains the same? This intermediate influence then must be an illusion unless it is something which *makes the heart better without holiness*. But it has appeared in a former Lecture, that in the nature of things the heart cannot be made better till it is supremely fixed on God. I ask again, what *aid* can the mind *need* other than light, when the self-determining power is fully competent to settle the issue? If the will cannot determine itself to good without other aid, what becomes of the boasted self-determining power? I cannot therefore comprehend what *more* the sinner is to receive for improving the grace. More *what*? More *strength*? But what do you mean by more strength? Do you mean more *natural* powers of body or mind? But these are not needed upon any plan, certainly not upon yours, for the will, you say, is fully competent to determine itself. Do you then mean more *moral* strength? But moral strength is *holiness*, of which the sinner possesses none till Regeneration is complete. Do you mean more strength of *resolution* and *desire*? But what are resolutions and desires that *make the heart no better*? Do you mean re-

solutions and desires which gradually *improve the heart without holiness?* But this again is running foul of the doctrine of progressive Regeneration, which has been shown to be a dream. You must then mean *more light*, and it comes to this at last, that all which *has been* received is an *enlightening* influence, that all which *is to be* received is *more light*, and still more light,—and the self-determining power of the will, influenced only by light, is to change the heart: and this carries you back to downright Arminianism, from which you never departed but in name, and in a more perfect confusion of tongues. Indeed it is capable of the fullest demonstration, that between the grossest Arminianism and the correct system there can be no medium. And then this ruinous attempt to bolster up the self-righteousness of sinners by telling them that God will reward their unholy deeds! Has it not been shown that all the feelings and actions of the unregenerate, so far as they partake of a moral nature, are not only unholy but sinful? And will you presume to tell men that God will reward sin, or things at best but indifferent? that He will lavish rewards on men who are *out of Christ*, and still lie under condemnation? Do it if you will, but you must answer it to God.

In opposition to all these theories the Calvinist tells you, that the heart is so depraved that it *will not improve divine influence* till it is changed; that it *stubbornly resists* all light and motives till it is forced to submit: that the moral Ruler has

as much occasion to subdue the heart by strength, as an earthly king to quell by force his rebellious subjects; and that the simple history of the change is, that *God makes His people willing* in the day of *His power*.\* And if the change is *instantaneous* from *unabated* enmity to supreme love, the Calvinist must be right. These other theories are founded on the principle of *progressive* Regeneration, (so far as they recognise any such change,) and on that of the self-determining power. Prove Regeneration to be instantaneous, and thus dissolve the dream of the self-determining power, and all these theories sink at once.

But to whom do the *Scriptures* ascribe the change in question? The answer meets you on every page. “*The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.*”

\* When the author speaks of the will's being *constrained* and *subdued*, he means nothing inconsistent with *freedom*. He means merely that a *rebellious will* has its *resistance destroyed* by the *power of God*. But it still remains a *will*, and *acts* as such; that is, the mind continues to will, in other words, to be *willing*, and if willing, therefore *free*. The very act of the will is voluntariness itself,—is therefore freedom itself: and the question whether this faculty is under a constraint inconsistent with liberty, is to the author's mind as unmeaning as the question whether *freedom is free*. The only effect of what in popular language he calls a *constraining* influence, is that God's people are made *willing* in the day of His power. But when an opposing will, which is the voluntary action of the man, has its resistance destroyed by the power of God,—when the spontaneous and wicked opposition of the soul is thus annihilated by superior strength, it is calculated to give a just idea of the *moral agency* and guilt of the sinner to say, that the *will is subdued*, that the *rebel is conquered*. And if this style does not perfectly accord with the dialect of metaphysicians, it is no less to its praise that it agrees with the language of prophets and apostles.

“Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.”

“By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.”\*

II. Is this change brought about according to the stated operations of nature, or in a supernatural way?

In settling this question every thing depends on obtaining precise ideas of the meaning of the terms. What then is meant by the stated operations of nature? Precisely what the terms obviously express, and what they have always been understood to import; viz. *the stated operations of divine power, exerted through the medium of second causes, and in so uniform a way that a person, having a comprehensive view of all the laws of nature, and of the second causes that would be brought to act in a particular case, might infallibly calculate the issue unless disappointed by a supernatural interposition.*

This stated operation extends not only to matter but mind, and of course to man as composed of both. Could you perfectly know the *habitual disposition* of a man, what would be the state of his

\* Prov. xvi. 1. 1 Cor. iii. 5—7. Eph. ii. 8. James i. 17.

*body* and *outward* circumstances at a given time, and all the *motives* that would assail him; and were you sufficiently skilled in the laws of nature to estimate universally and with precision the influence of second causes; you might infallibly calculate how he would feel and act if not prevented by a supernatural influence. Even with our limited knowledge of the laws of nature, we can form in many instances very correct conjectures respecting the future conduct of men. A skill at this calculation forms much of the ability of the statesman, and indeed much of the prudence of ordinary life. From the laws of nature you may calculate with great certainty, that men in given circumstances will exercise feelings *wholly unlike any which they now possess*, and in some cases, wholly unlike any which they *ever had*; as that a passionate man, whom you now see placid and affectionate, will rage when he is provoked; as that a covetous man, who is now melted into compassion and charity, will exercise oppression as soon as a fit occasion offers; as that a youth, when he becomes a parent, will exercise parental affection. Now can you form any such calculation respecting the future *conversion* of men? or could you if you were perfectly acquainted with all the laws of nature? THIS IS THE QUESTION TO BE TRIED.

But before proceeding to examine those laws of nature on which this effect must depend if it is a natural effect, let us be fully apprized of the consequences which must result from adopting such a principle. If the change is brought about by di-

vine power working through the medium of second causes, in a stated order, according to the established course of nature, then these consequences will follow :

First, no *greater* or *other* exertion of power is made *at the time* of producing the effect, than was made in the antecedent preparations in nature to produce it.

Secondly, no *greater* or *other* exertion of power is made *where the effect follows*, than where it does *not*, the whole exertion being put forth to support *the attributes of the natural agents*, which are always the same whether combined for action or not, and must produce the effect when they are combined and meet with no *special* resistance. Thus no greater or other exertion is made to produce a crop, where seed, and soil, and rain, and heat, and air combine, and find no *special* resistance, than to support the same agents where they do not combine, or where the crop is prevented by reptiles, flood, fire, or the violence of man.

Thirdly, where all the natural agents combine, the effect cannot be prevented without a supernatural interposition.

Fourthly, where natural agents enough combine to produce the effect in one instance, they will produce it in all, unless prevented by *special* resistance. We should then expect that the same outward means that can convert one, would convert all, unless some invisible cause, such as peculiar stubbornness, or special temptation, or the self-deter-

mining power, prevented. But persons apparently the most stubborn, and most exposed to temptation, often become Christians, while others, apparently more pliable and less tempted, remain in sin,—both under the same instruction. To account for numberless disproportions of this sort, we should be obliged, so far as we can discover, to resort to the self-determining power of the will.

The whole drift of these consequences is to deny that Regeneration is any greater or other exhibition of divine power than the common operations of nature. But how does this comport with those texts which represent the change as preeminently the work of God, and as being a vast exhibition of power? “This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, *I* will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and *will be* their God, and they *shall be* my people.” “And *I* will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever.—*I* will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me.” “*The Lord thy God* will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God.” “*I* will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they *shall* look upon me whom they have pierced, and they *shall* mourn.” “*I* thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because *thou* hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in *thy* sight." "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but *my Father* which is in heaven." "No man can come to me except *the Father* which hath sent me draw him.—No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of *my Father*." "A certain woman, named Lydia,—heard us, whose heart *the Lord* opened." "For *God* who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision *made without hands*, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of *the operation of God* who hath raised Him from the dead." "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know—what is the *exceeding greatness of His power* to us-ward who *believe*, according to the working of His *mighty power* which He wrought in Christ *when He raised Him from the dead*, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." "By the grace of God I am what I am:" "ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being *sanctified by the Holy Ghost*:" "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me *by the effectual working of His power*.—Now unto Him that is able to do *exceeding abundantly above all*



that we ask or think, ACCORDING TO the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”\*

Such is the emphasis every where laid, not only on the *agency*, but on the *mighty power* of God in sanctifying the heart. And now let me ask, do these representations appear as though He was the Author of holiness in no higher sense than He is the “Father” of “the rain,” and begetteth “the drops of the dew”?

But this question must be brought to a stricter test. It is necessary to examine those laws of nature in relation to mind on which the change must depend if it is a natural effect. If this part of the subject should be less intelligible and interesting, it may be some consolation to know that it will not be long.

There are but two ways of changing the mind of man by second causes; one by *motives*, the other by *mechanical influence*. Every influence of a second cause which is not of the nature of a motive, may properly be denominated mechanical, as its action, not being through the medium of the will, is much like that of one material substance upon another. Now if we examine the effects produced on mind by these two causes, we shall come to the three following conclusions: first, that *motives*

\* Deut. xxx. 6. Jer. xxxi. 33. and xxxii. 39, 40. Zech. xii. 10. Mat. xi. 25, 26. and xvi. 17. John vi. 44, 65. Acts xvi. 14. Rom. xv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Eph. i. 18—20. and iii. 7, 20. Gal. ii. 11, 12.

have no influence to change the *disposition*; secondly, that *mechanical* causes, which alter the disposition, taste, and feelings of the mind, do it by a *gradual* process, except in the single instance where the change depends on a sudden alteration in the state of the *body*; thirdly, that of course no law of nature can produce an *instantaneous* change of *heart*.

The three leading laws of nature in relation to mind, which have any connexion with our subject, are these :

First, that the *will*, the immediate cause of muscular motion, is governed by *motives* addressed to the *heart*, and *approved* by the heart. As far as the motive agrees with the temper of the heart, that is, with the tastes and affections of the man, and no further, has it any power to move the will. A feast is no motive where there is no appetite. The happiness of another is no motive where the person is hated. The glory of God is no motive to an opposing heart. The power of a motive to influence the will, always presupposes a disposition in the heart to entertain and fall in with it.

Secondly, the *disposition* of the heart, (whether you mean by disposition the *stated manner* of its acting, or the *foundation* of its exercises,) is never produced by *motives* even as a second cause. If by the disposition of the heart you mean the *stated manner* of its acting, and call the *objects* towards which it acts the *motives* of its action, then my position is, that the objects, (though individually the

occasion of each particular exercise,) never gave the heart the *habitual turn* to act with love rather than aversion towards objects of *that description*. To be beloved the objects must individually be of a class which the heart is *already* accustomed to love, or is commencing the *custom* under the influence of a cause wholly distinct from the objects. An object belonging to a class which the heart is accustomed to hate, will not excite love, till there is first a change of *stated* action which the object did not produce. The heart must have begun a *course* of action favourable to objects of a particular description, before you can calculate that any *one* of them will be beloved. When one of that class, standing *late* in the series, is presented to the mind, and meets with regard, you at once perceive that *that* individual did not produce the established *course*. Transfer then your thoughts to the *first* object in the series, and you immediately discover that *that* individual had no more influence to settle the course. You instantly resort to an anterior cause. That cause you say is God, whose influence to begin the course was prior in the order of nature to the first act towards the first object. The objects individually *occasion* action of *some sort*; but that a whole class are *statedly* loved by one, and hated by another, must be imputed to a cause wholly distinct from the objects themselves: for if the cause lay in the objects, the effect would be the same on every mind. It is obvious therefore that the love of an object *presupposes* a course of action favourable to objects of *that class*, previ-

ously established, or then commencing under the influence of a cause wholly independent of the object. In other words, it *presupposes a stated manner of action*,—a *disposition*, (as you are pleased to call it,) which the object had no influence to produce. What is *presupposed* in the *first* influence which the object exerts, could not be produced by the object itself, even as a second cause.

On the other hand, if you mean by disposition a taste or principle that is the *foundation* of exercises, then it is still more evident that an object to be beloved must be adapted to the *existing* disposition: of course it had no influence to *produce* it. If you admit the existence of a taste or principle, and call the object the motive which moves the heart to action, you will readily allow that the object must be accommodated to the taste *before* it can become a motive, that is, before it can be beloved. It must find the disposition prepared to entertain it before it can move the heart. A hated object can never be a motive to love; but a beloved object finds the taste already in its favour. The power of the object to *become* a motive *presupposes* a disposition in the heart to love it. Of course it did not *produce* that disposition even as a second cause. And if by its own charms it cannot create the disposition, neither can it by associating with itself the consideration of *advantage*. The heart is not so to be bribed. “If a man would give all the substance of his house *for love*, it would utterly be contemned.”\* It is impossible then that a new disposition

\* Cant. viii. 7.

should be produced in a natural, (I may add, or even in a supernatural) way, by the influence of motives. Motives, as objects of love or aversion, occasion the heart to act *according to its existing disposition*, and there their power ends.\*

Thirdly, though the taste and feelings of the heart cannot be changed by motives, they do undergo great and permanent alterations through the *mechanical* influence of second causes, and therefore in a natural way; but these changes are all brought about by a *gradual* process, except in the single instance where they depend on a sudden alteration in the state of the *body*. Where the body is suddenly and permanently thrown into a new state by deep affliction or disease, the man may instantly and finally lose, for example, his love of books, his love of musick, or painting, or commercial business, or a military life. In all other instances the change is slow and progressive. How many new tastes or habits of feeling are gradually contracted by enlargement of views, by increasing age, by new con-

\* To some who cast an eye on the first edition of this work, it did not appear self-evident that a new disposition may not be produced by the instrumentality of motives, though not in a natural, yet in a supernatural way. But if *in the nature of things* a motive cannot exert an influence on the mind till it first accords with the disposition; for instance, if a feast cannot excite a desire while it is loathed; it cannot be *made* to exert such an influence by any power whatever. For one to exercise a direct desire for what he hates,—for a detested object to awaken love, or by all the considerations associated with it to produce a disposition to love the object for its own sake, appears not to lie within the reach of possibility. Such an *antecedent* as the presentation of motives, there may be; but it is a mere antecedent, without any of the influence which belongs to a second cause or instrument in the works of God, whether natural or supernatural.

nexions, by a change of employment, by the influence of climate, diet, affliction, and various other causes.

According to these laws, then, God acts in a natural way when He causes the muscles to obey the will, the will to obey the heart by yielding to motives which the heart approves, the heart to act towards different objects according to its present disposition, *naturally* produced, (whether you mean by disposition the *stated manner* of its acting, or something which is the *foundation* of its exercises,) or when He alters the disposition, either *suddenly* by a change in the *body*, or *progressively* by the *mechanical* influence of other natural causes. These I call natural effects, because a person acquainted with all the laws of nature, knowing perfectly the present disposition of another, and all the mechanical causes that would conspire to alter it, (every thing supernatural being withheld,) having a complete view of the state of that person's body and outward circumstances at a given time, and foreseeing all the motives that would be addressed to his heart, might calculate how he would feel and act, we have every reason to believe, with as much precision as we can calculate an eclipse.

Now to apply these principles to the case of Regeneration. It will not be pretended that this great and permanent revolution of character is produced by a sudden alteration in the state of the *body*; and as it is instantaneous, it cannot be brought about by the *mechanical* influence of other second causes, not therefore by *light*, in the way that our tastes and

habits of feeling are gradually changed by *knowledge*. Therefore in one of the two ways in which the mind is changed by second causes, this revolution cannot take place. It must then, if it is a natural effect, be brought about by *motives*. But motives, we have seen, have no influence to produce a new disposition in either sense of the word, least of all to produce that heavenly temper which is wrought in Regeneration. Though the Word of God in the shape of motives has an important instrumentality in carrying on the preparatory work in the conscience, and in *occasioning* the *exercises* of the new heart, it is in no sense instrumental in *changing the disposition*. The motives must find the disposition already prepared to favour them before they can act upon the mind. The holiness and justice of God, for instance, are no motives to love while they are hated. The amiableness of religion is no motive while it does not appear amiable to the mind. The mercy of God, and the rewards of religion, with all the hopes they inspire, and all the claims to gratitude they bring, and I may add, the terrors of the law, find nothing of a moral nature to address in such a heart but the mere principle of selfishness : but considerations addressed to selfishness, or which find nothing else in the heart to appeal to, can never weaken the dominion of self-love. The reasonableness of religion, and the criminality of sin, may press the *conscience* ; but they will press millions of consciences to eternity without proving motives to love. If conscience can controul the heart, the heart is not depraved. If the heart is

ready to love God as soon as it sees its obligations, it is well disposed. If all that is to be removed is ignorance, its sin is only a misfortune. If the enmity is a mere prejudice which light can remove, it opposes nothing but a *false* image of God, and is commendable. But if the carnal mind is hostile to the *true* God, it will hate Him the more the more He is seen, and light, (as at the Last Day,) will only rouse the enmity to stronger action. To use light then as an instrument to cure the disposition, is like using oil to extinguish fire. But it is enough to ask, how can the motives of religion be the instruments of producing a new disposition, when that disposition must exist before the motives can take hold of the heart? Or the question may be decided by *facts*. Have not all these motives assailed the heart for many years, without taking away a particle of its opposition? For months together have they not been set home upon the conscience, without at all weakening the enmity? How comes it to pass then, that at length in one moment they enter the heart and rise to supreme dominion? Have they all at once broken their way through, and assisted in new-modelling a heart on which till that moment they could have no influence? The decisive question is, Was the power applied to the *motives* to open a passage for themselves, or to the *heart* to open a passage for them? Let the event declare,—the heart was new before the motives entered.

As then the change in question is effected neither by mechanical causes, nor by the influence of motives, it is not brought about by any



of the laws of nature, and of course is supernatural.

An effect may be supernatural which is produced by a second cause *above nature*, for instance, an angel; but the one under consideration is not only supernatural but *immediate*. Or if not altogether immediate because there was such an antecedent as the presentation of motives, yet immediate in the sense in which those effects were which followed the extension of Moses' rod, the blast of trumpets before the walls of Jericho, the voice of Ezekiel in the valley of bones, and the application of clay to the eyes of the blind man. In all these cases the antecedent had no such influence as belongs to a second cause in nature, for instance, to fire as the agent in consuming a building; but every body sees that the power was as immediately exerted as though no antecedent had existed. In the same sense the power which changes the heart is immediate, acting through no second cause, producing its effect by no instrument: and if immediate, then certainly supernatural; and I may add, *special*, as distinguished from the *common* efforts of nature.

To sum up all in a word, there is no stated operation of divine power from which we can infer, or could if we knew all the laws of nature, that a convicted sinner, in any state in which he can be before Regeneration, will the next moment be the subject of this change; or indeed that a man placed in any situation, or assailed by any means, will ever become a real Christian. In other words,

there is no operation of God upon a second cause which is an invariable antecedent to this effect. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every man that is born of the Spirit."\*

This doctrine is confirmed by the Word of God in representations as strong as any language can furnish. The change is there expressed by a variety of names borrowed from the most stupendous operations of supernatural power. It is called a *new creation*; "We are His workmanship *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works." "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a *new creature*." "The *new man* which after God is *created* in righteousness and true holiness." If the first creation established *the laws of nature*, the new creation, according to analogy, should establish *another series of operations, regular indeed, but above nature*. And this appears to be the fact. Further, the change is called a *resurrection from the dead*: "You hath He *quickened* who were *dead* in trespasses and sins.—God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were *dead* in sins, hath *quickened* us together with Christ." "As the Father *raiseth up the dead* and *quickeneth* them, even so the Son *quickeneth* whom He will.—The hour is coming, and now is, when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall *live*." The vision of Ezekiel is to the same purpose. The change is also

\* John iii. 8.

called by names taken from the supernatural operations of our Saviour upon the bodies of men, such as *opening the eyes of the blind*, and *unstopping the ears of the deaf*: “I the Lord have called thee in righteousness,—to open the *blind eyes*.” “And in that day shall the *deaf* hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the *blind* shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.” It is called *the removal of the old heart and the production of a new one*: “A new heart—will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” It is called a *new birth*: “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”\* The first birth is according to nature; but I am disposed to inquire with the wondering Nicodemus, by what *natural* process a man can be born when he is old. Indeed all these figures, if you would save them from the charge of the most unaccountable extravagance, denote a change above nature. How strangely inflated would it seem to call any of the natural alterations which daily take place in our feelings and conduct, a new creation, a new birth, or a resurrection from the dead!

But though the effect is supernatural I do not call it *miraculous*, this term being appropriated to events more obvious to the senses, and intended to

\* Isai. xxix. 18. and xlii. 6, 7. Ezek. xi. 19. and xxxvi. 26, 27. and xxxvii. 1—10. John iii. 3, 5. and v. 21, 25. 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 1, 4, 5, 10. and iv. 24. Col. ii. 13.

furnish visible and tangible proof of the truth of religion. This is the fair definition of a miracle ; and to apply the name to such an invisible, unobtrusive effect, can have no other tendency than to discredit the doctrine of a supernatural change.

III. Is this change wrought on account of any thing previously done by the sinner, or in any sense by his cooperation ?

This question is soon disposed of. It has been proved that till the moment of the change the sinner is in a state of complete rebellion against God, and except things indifferent does nothing but sin. But does the moral Governour of the world reward actions which are sinful or indifferent? I have proved that He does not. And what proof can you set in opposition to this? None derived from His *promises*, for it has been shown that none of the promises respect the actions of the unregenerate. And if no *promise*, then no explicit *encouragement* ; for with every being of truth and honour such an encouragement would amount to a promise. You cannot then find the proof in His *Word*. And to argue from His *providence* is altogether fallacious. “No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all ; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.”\* You do not then find the proof in His providence, nor yet in His *Word*. Where then do you find it? Indeed for a man, *without any other dependance on Christ than the un-*

\* Eccl. ix. 1, 2.

*regenerate feel*, to expect to obtain a new heart from God by any thing which he can say or do, is the very definition of *self-righteousness*.

Nor does the sinner *cooperate* in producing this change, unless *unabated enmity* is cooperation. In the conversion which follows he is indeed active ; but in effecting the change itself, he cooperates in no other sense than the rebel who is subdued by force of arms assists his prince in vanquishing himself. His *conscience* is indeed on the side of God, and so are the consciences of devils. His *wishes* appear to lean the same way, but it is from selfish considerations. His body so far cooperates as to bring him to the temple and altar. But his *heart*, which in the sight of God is the *whole man*, struggles against the Spirit till the change is complete. Till the whole cause has exerted itself, the whole strength of the moral affections is opposed to holiness.

### INFERENCES.

(1.) Wherever this supernatural power is exerted the effect will surely follow. What should hinder? The opposition of the heart? But the very thing which the power has to do is to annihilate that opposition, and make the subject "*willing*." If it does not this it does nothing, it has not the least influence, it is no power. If God attempts to sanctify the heart and does not succeed, one thing is certain, creatures can never know that the attempt

was made unless He informs them. They cannot feel His hand, they only feel the effect. But God is not likely to disclose a secret so discreditable to His power. Do you say His power is limited by a regard for the *liberty* of His subjects? Then I propose this dilemma: either He *can* make his people “willing” *without destroying their freedom*, or He *cannot*: if He can, why should the attempt ever fail? if He cannot, His success is never certain, and He must ask leave of the self-determining power of the will to have a Church: how then could He *promise* His Son a seed to serve Him? But it is not so. He *can* make His people “willing” and yet leave them free. If they are “willing” are they not free? What is freedom but a power to do *as they please*? In *no act* are they made to act against their will. Their willingness, though produced by God, is as much *their own* willingness as though they had produced it themselves. Will you say that the infant does not himself *live* because he did not produce his own life? or that he does not himself *see* because he did not create his own eyes? or that a man is not himself willing, and therefore free, because he was made willing in the day of God’s power? What then should hinder God from making His people willing in every instance in which He undertakes? In other words, what should hinder Him from *destroying all resistance*, and making the soul a willing captive, in every case where He attempts to produce this identical effect? This is the only thing that He ever attempts to ac-

comply when he exerts His sanctifying influence. If this is not done nothing is done ; if this is not attempted nothing is attempted ; for between making His people willing, and *not* making them willing, there is no spot at which His sanctifying power can stop, no point at which it can aim. In all cases then where this influence is exerted, the effect will certainly follow.\* Of course wherever this effect does *not* follow, the influence is not exerted. Therefore,

(2.) God exerts this influence upon some and not upon others ; and *that* not because the favoured ones have better improved His grace, not because they have done any thing to *aid* or *induce* Him, but because He “will have mercy on whom” He “will have mercy.” “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.—Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault ? for who hath resisted His will ? Nay but O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour ?” “What saith the answer of God ? *I have reserved to myself* seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then at this

\* Yet the influence is not properly called *irresistible*, for it merely *prevents resistance*.

present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? *Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*”\* Does the Arminian hear this? Do a gainsaying world hear this? Let every mouth be stopped, and the whole world prostrate and speechless before God. Amen.

\* Mat. xi. 25, 26. Rom. ix. 15—21. and xi. 4—7. 1 Cor. iv. 7.



## LECTURE VII.

### MEANS OF GRACE.

ISAIAH LV. 11.

SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH ; IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID, BUT IT SHALL ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH I PLEASE, AND IT SHALL PROSPER IN THE THING WHERE TO I SENT IT.

IN former Lectures it has appeared that during all the convictions and exertions of the unregenerate, they experience no diminution of depravity, no approximation towards holiness, no feelings which are otherwise than sinful or indifferent ; that none of their actions in the sight of God are good, none of their prayers answered ; that no influence of the Spirit is exerted upon their minds further than to enlighten them and leave truth to work its natural effect ; and that Regeneration, viewed distinct from the convictions which go before and the exercises which follow, is wrought by *immediate* power without an instrument.

It might be expected that something should be said, in this part of the Course, about the Means of Grace ; and for this purpose I have chosen a text

which will lead me to speak of *the Word of God*: for excepting two things in the exertions of *Christians* which I shall presently mention, all the Means of Grace consist in *the truths of the Word, and the various ways of conveying them to the mind*. What are Bibles, sermons, and sacraments, but instruments to carry truth to the understanding and heart? What are all the expostulations of others, but efforts to press the motives contained in truth upon the sensibilities of the soul? What are the passions which ministers address, but channels through which truth is carried to the quick, or instruments to rouse the soul to view it with sharpened attention? What does providence more than illustrate and enforce revealed truth? Sabbaths are not means of grace, so much as *opportunities* to attend on ordinances and exercises that are. All the exertions of men for their own salvation, (except mere motions of the *body*, and two things in the efforts of Christians before alluded to,) may be summed up in the single word ATTENTION,—attention to *truth*, and to the *ordinances* which convey truth to the mind. If the attention is set to watch their own corruptions, it is only to see the illustrations of a revealed truth. If they strive to regulate their passions, the only effort, besides shunning motives which excite the passions, in other words, avoiding temptation,—the only effort made upon the *mind*, is to fix its eye steadily on *motives*, drawn, if the motives are right, from the Word of God. Every other exertion to subdue the passions or improve

the temper, (as any one may perceive by a close attention to the actings of his own mind,) is made upon the *body*, and spends its strength upon the nervous system. And what is meditation, other than a fixed attention to truth? Prayer too, besides the efficacy of asking in faith, and the mere exercise of pious feelings, is only the highest degree of attention. I say, *besides the efficacy of asking in faith, and the mere exercise of pious feelings*; these are the two things in the exertions of Christians, before alluded to, which are not included in *attention*; and these are the only two things comprehended in the Means of Grace which are not resolvable into truth and the means of getting truth before the mind. The prayer of faith certainly obtains divine influences for ourselves and others; and there are appointed ways of *improving our graces by exercise*, (for instance, in thanksgiving and praise,) much in the same way as you improve *soldiers* by exercise, or confirm any of your habits by *indulgence*. Yet even in these two cases, so far as the *affections* are improved, it is done through the instrumentality of truth. The sanctified affections which follow the prayer of faith, (or “*looking*” to Christ,) follow from transforming *views* of Him; and the *exercises* by which the heart is improved, owe their effect to the instrumentality of the truths contemplated.

To these remarks I may add, that the divine Spirit, except in His sanctifying influence, does no more than carry in the truth and lay it before the

eye of the mind, and apply it to that individual conscience. For it has been proved that there is no influence between an enlightening and a sanctifying one,—between that which addresses motives to an old disposition, and that which creates or strengthens a new one. And even in His sanctifying influence, so far as the *affections* are concerned, the effect is wrought by the instrumentality of truth.

Dropping then from our calculation the efficacy of the prayer of faith, and the appointed ways of improving our graces by exercise, (so far as these *are* exceptions;)—laying out of view also the motions of the body, and the *sanctifying* influence of the Spirit; and all that is contained in means or efforts, human or divine, for the salvation of ourselves or others, is comprehended in truth, and the various ways of presenting truth to the mind. Absolutely the whole as relates to the *unregenerate*, (except mere bodily motions,) is contained in these two things. This class offer no prayer of faith, they partake of no sanctifying influence, they have no graces to improve by exercise; and as their hearts cannot be made better till they are made new, nothing can be done for them but to carry to their minds a deep conviction of truth.

Now all the truth ever intended for the salvation of men is contained in the Word of God. Nothing new is revealed by the Spirit. The exhibitions in creation and providence only confirm and illustrate Bible truths. The Word may be regarded as the epitome of all the manifestations of God

to man. With the exceptions then already made, every question relating to the Means of Grace, and to efforts, human or divine, for the salvation of men, may be reduced to these two : What is the use of the Word of God ? and how is it conveyed to the mind ? In attempting to illustrate these two points, I shall treat,

I. Of the use of the Word generally ;

II. Of its use to the unregenerate in particular ;

III. Of the means and influences by which it is conveyed to *their* minds ;

IV. Of its success in accomplishing, as the text suggests, every end which God designed.

I. Of the use of the Word generally.

It has always been the received opinion that the Word of God is the grand instrument of converting the world ; and this opinion is confirmed by the testimony of facts. It is a matter of fact, that where the Gospel is preached statedly and faithfully, more are converted than where it is seldom or loosely preached. It is a matter of fact, that when God intends to bring men to salvation, (the *only* salvation revealed,) He first places them under the sound of the Gospel, leads them to attend on the means of instruction, awakens their attention to the truths of His Word, causes them ordinarily to be pressed by the importunities of others, increases by these means their conviction of truth, and after all this changes their hearts. It is a matter of fact, that as Christians grow in knowledge they grow in grace ; that as a realizing view

of truth increases, their holy affections increase. If in all these previous steps you can see nothing but an arbitrary series of antecedents, like the rod of Moses, or the voice of Ezekiel over the valley of bones, still they are not to be regarded as unimportant.

It must be acknowledged that we can see no instrumentality in truth to create, or increase, or continue the new *disposition*. In the regulation of that power truth has none of the influence of a second cause,—no more influence than Ezekiel's voice had to raise the dead. It may then be asked, Why should a second cause intervene which has no influence? If divine power produces the whole effect, why couple itself with a powerless cause? Why not act alone without that idle attendant? These questions would be unanswerable if there was nothing to be done but to create, and continue, and increase the new *disposition*: but there are *views*, and *affections*, and *acts of the will*, and motions of the *body*, to be produced, or the disposition is altogether useless. In the production of all these, both in their beginning and in all the degrees of their increase, truth, where it finds the *disposition* favourable, has the proper influence of a second cause or instrument. Every consideration which is apprehended by the understanding or felt by the heart, every object of holy affection, every motive which controuls the will and impels to action, is found in truth alone. This is the essential and immediate instrument by which

all right views and feelings, all correct acts of choice and virtuous conduct, are produced, and by which a rational kingdom is moved and governed. If God is to preside over a rational kingdom, He must move it altogether by the instrumentality of motives. To act without motives, is to be a madman or a machine. To love or hate without an object, is a contradiction in terms. Should God's renewing influence pass over a mind wholly destitute of knowledge, nothing would be *felt*, no affections would be excited, nothing sensible would follow. Although therefore truth cannot create or continue the disposition, nor *efficiently* cause even the affections, there is good reason why the power which produces these effects should always accompany the truth, and (the case of infants and heathens being out of question,) should never act without it. Why should divine power produce a disposition to feel where no feelings can follow? or incline the heart to love where no object is found?

There are good reasons also why truth should come to men through the medium of *language*, and in the form of a *written Word*. It might have been communicated *immediately*, as it was to the first created angel and to inspired men; but in the display of truth, both in heaven and earth, God has principally made use of second causes, as being better calculated to furnish the *evidence* which is adapted to the government of rational creatures. The whole system of matter is a system of second

causes, forming a visible chain leading into the secrecy of the First Cause, and betraying an agency which otherwise might have been forever concealed. So necessary have those tangible links been deemed, that even in cases where God has exerted His power miraculously and *immediately*, He has generally made use of visible antecedents to connect the effect more evidently with His own power; as in the case of Moses' rod, the trumpets at Jericho, the pitchers and lamps of Gideon's army, the washing of Naaman in Jordan, the extension of Elisha's body over the Shunammite's son, the salt cast into the fountain, the clay applied to the eyes of the blind man, and many other instances which might be mentioned. So instead of conveying truth to mankind by immediate revelation, accompanied with silent efforts of sanctifying power, He has chosen to send it to them in the languages of men, in the shape of a written Word, and to form a visible chain of prophets, apostles, ministers, and ordinances; not only because this mode was better adapted on many other accounts to the purposes of a moral government, but that He might manifest more distinctly the source of the power which converts the world. Thus the word with which our Saviour composed the winds, and healed the sick, discovered whence the power proceeded, more than if He had done the same by a silent influence. If then the whole body of truth by which the heart, the will, and the life are to be influenced, is conveyed only through a written Word, and by the



ordinances instituted to impress that Word on the mind, there can, in an ordinary way, be no holiness, no salvation, without an attendance on the Means of Grace.

Now the word of God may be considered as acting on the mind at three different stages; viz. before Regeneration, at the time of conversion, and in the progress of sanctification. By attending to its effects at these several stages we shall discover, that though the difference between a sinner the moment before and the moment after Regeneration is produced by *immediate* power, yet the difference between a convicted sinner and an established Christian, much more between a heathen and an established Christian, is in a great measure brought about by the instrumentality of the Word. "How—shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?—So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."\*

The use of the Word before Regeneration I shall consider under the second head. Let us now examine its influence at the time of conversion, and in the progress of sanctification.

At the time of conversion the truths of the Word are the instruments of producing all the thoughts which fill the understanding, all the motions of the heart, the will, and the body: and are thus

\* Rom. x. 14, 17.

the instruments of producing the whole of that *turning* which the term imports. A manifestation of *God* to the soul is as much the instrument of producing *love to God*, as light is the instrument of vision. A manifestation of *sin* is equally the instrument of producing *repentance*; and a manifestation of *Christ*, as much the instrument of producing *faith*: for without the presentation of the objects the affections could not exist. Hence by a very significant figure the Word of God is called "*the sword of the Spirit*," and is said to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow."\* If your heart is pierced with a sword, you feel not the hand which wields it, but the sword only. So in conversion the soul feels not the Spirit, but only the truths of the Word. There is however this difference in the two cases; in one instance the power is applied to the *heart* to open a passage for the Word, in the other it is applied to the *sword* to open a passage for itself. But in both cases the instrument alone is felt. A penetrating sense of truth, together with those affections, determinations, and actions which follow in view of truth, comprehends the whole effect of Regeneration. Regeneration is the formation of the *eye*, but light is necessary for actual vision. That conversion is thus brought about by the instrumentality of the Word, is expressly asserted:

\* Eph. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12. Rev. i. 16. and ii. 12.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, *converting the soul.*” On the same principle they who preach the Word are said to *convert* men: “If any of you do err from the truth, and one *convert* him, let him know that he which *converted* a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death.”\*

Hitherto I have<sup>‡</sup> made a distinction between Regeneration and conversion;† but it must be allowed that the former is sometimes taken in so broad a sense as to include both; and then the general change, bearing the name of Regeneration, is said to be brought about by the instrumentality of the Word. “Of His own will *begat* He us *with the Word of truth.*” “Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God.*” “For in Jesus Christ I have *begotten* you *through the Gospel.*” The same idea is conveyed in other forms of speech: “Is not my Word as a fire,—and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”‡ As a new living man is a man with new *feelings* and *actions*, so by a new heart, in the fullest sense of that phrase, is meant a heart with new *affections*. When men are commanded to *make to themselves new hearts*, to

\* Ps. xix. 7. James v. 19, 20.

† The same distinction was generally made by the old Calvinistick divines. By Regeneration they meant the implantation of a new *principle* or *disposition*, to serve as the foundation of new exercises; by conversion, the *actual turning* to God in the exercises which followed.

‡ Jer. xxiii. 29. John vi. 63. 1 Cor. iv. 15. James i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23.

*circumcise* and *purify* their hearts,\* nothing more nor less is meant than that they should *exercise new affections*. Regeneration or the production of a new heart, understood in this sense, is certainly accomplished by the instrumentality of the Word.

By the same instrumentality are produced all the new affections, volitions, and actions of the Christian in the progress of sanctification. Though the new disposition, as distinct from the affections, is both continued and increased by *immediate* power, yet that power is exerted in so stated a way that the improvement of the disposition keeps pace with the growing strength of the affections, and the affections themselves are increased by the instrumentality of increasing knowledge. As truth becomes more clearly understood, the heart acts more vigorously towards it. Thus while in the “glass” of the Word we behold “the glory of the Lord,” we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory,”†—much in the same way as men are improved by *example*. Hence a very distinct emphasis is laid upon the Word as the instrument of sanctification. “Christ—loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the Word*.” “Now ye are clean *through the Word* which I have spoken unto you.” “Sanctify them *through thy truth*, thy Word is truth.” “Ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth,) the Word

\* Deut. x. 16. Jer. iv. 4. Ezek. xviii. 31. James iv. 8.

† 2 Cor. iii. 18. with 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

of God, which *effectually worketh* also in you that believe." Hence the dispensation of the Word is compared to planting and watering seed in the earth, and they who preach it are called fellow labourers with God: "I have planted. Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.—We are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry."\*

II. I am to consider the use of the Word to the unregenerate. How the truth is instrumental *after* the new disposition is implanted, is now apparent. But it may be asked, what is the use of communicating knowledge *before*, when it can excite no holy affections, especially as it is not expected to have any influence in altering the disposition? Why is the sinner commanded, entreated, and even convicted, when it is known that none of the considerations suggested will move his heart? Why not reserve the motives till the disposition is renewed? In other words, why pour truth upon the mind before the heart is disposed to embrace it? In reply to this I observe, that even in cases where it is foreseen that the sinner will resist the light and perish, this experiment will illustrate his hardness and inexcusableness, and display the condescension and mercy of God. The truths exhibited are only an appeal of One who requires a reasonable service, to the reason and conscience of a moral agent, who in the service required must be guided by light, and must exert understanding, will, and affections towards

\* John xv. 3. and xvii. 17. 1 Cor. iii. 6, 9. Eph. v. 25, 26. 1 Thes. iii. 13.

the identical objects which the truths present. It is the moral Governour bringing forward His just claims, disclosing the obligations of the sinner, and offering him life on condition of his doing what nothing but his obstinacy prevents. This proceeding will convince the universe that He was the consistent, righteous moral Governour, and the merciful Father; and that the sinner's opposition was most unreasonable, and his ruin self-induced. This publick display of character is all the end that can be answered where Regeneration does *not* follow; and this end will be answered where it *does* follow. But in the latter case a further purpose is accomplished by the antecedent knowledge. A clear discernment of truth before Regeneration prepares the sinner for greater humility, love, and gratitude, and for more full acknowledgments to Christ, through all his future existence. Even in the process of *sanctification*, it is God's usual method by discoveries of truth to prepare the way for stronger exercises of repentance and gratitude, before He excites these affections. The only difference is, in the present instance He prepares the way before He gives the new *disposition*. But in both cases the same reason exists why conviction of truth should precede the *affections*. The difficulty which has been raised about His commanding, urging, and entreating sinners to act before He disposes them, will vanish when the nature and sources of the necessary antecedent knowledge are considered. What sinners want is a just view of their

sin, and ruin, and need of a Saviour, drawn, as it necessarily must be, from a discovery of God, His law, and the claims which the moral Governour has upon them. These claims, it is to be remembered, are not weakened by their dependance on Him for holiness, that is, *by their incorrigible indisposition to obey*: for if their indisposition impaired His claims, they never could reasonably be required to resist their inclinations, nor arraigned for following them; and then all moral government would be at an end. Acting as moral Governour, and treating with moral agents, He makes therefore no account of Himself as the *main-spring of motion*, but addresses them, whatever be their character, as distinct and complete agents, and holds the same language with them that one man would hold with another whom he wished to reclaim. There is no correct display, nor even exercise, of a moral government upon any other principle. Such then are the claims of the moral Governour. Now if the foundation of all just ideas of guilt lies in a right understanding of these claims, it is necessary for the conviction of sinners that their relation to the moral Governour should be laid open; and this can be done only by His coming out with the full assertion of all His authority and rights. In order to throw Himself upon the view of any individual, He must come to him with all His demands, and without making any allowance for indisposition and dependance, must reason and expostulate with him as man with man. The moment that the propriety

of this course is practically denied by the moral Governour Himself, His claims are withdrawn from the view of men, and the foundation of all just conviction is removed. Let it be considered also that the primary and essential *instruments* by which the moral Governour works in the management of a rational kingdom, are *reason* and *motives*. It behooves Him therefore, acting in this character, to spread before the sinner all the motives which ought to influence a rational mind; such as the character of the Lawgiver, the nature of the obedience required, his own obligations to obey, the evil of transgression, and the sanctions of the law. This is the only proper way to treat a rational being. Thus you would deal with a rebellious servant whom you wished to reduce to obedience. You would set before him the justice of your claims, the evil of his conduct, and all the reasons for submission which you could produce. It was only pursuing the same principle a little further, that when God undertook to bring back a revolted race to His service, and to salvation through a Redeemer, He not only exposed to their view their guilt, ruin, just condemnation, and helplessness, and thus made "the law" a "schoolmaster to bring" them "unto Christ;" but laid before them the character, offices, and work of the Mediator, the terms of salvation through Him, and their obligations to return in this appointed way. Such an exposition of His character and government, and the way of restoration, with all the circumstances of their case, (made by a



course of conduct adapted to them as subjects of moral government,) *furnishes the very knowledge they need* to fit them for deep repentance and admiring views of Christ, and to bring them to ascribe all their salvation to Him as soon as their hearts are renewed.

Peculiar advantages are gained by making these discoveries *before* Regeneration. The exhibition of such a government and such a way of salvation to an *opposing* heart, is calculated to try the strength of that opposition, and to produce upon the sinner a lasting impression of the greatness of the mercy and power which redeemed him. The inveteracy of his opposition becomes more apparent by his unavailing struggles to subdue himself. He has an opportunity to contemplate the wretchedness of his prison, not with the look of a passing stranger, but with the sensations of the prisoner himself, and while entertaining little or no hope of escape,—to view his native misery, not with the ken of an angel, but in some measure with the experienced eye of the damned. Thus he collects a deep sense of many truths, not otherwise learned, which he carries with him into a gracious state; and they will help him to look back through all eternity, with deeper humility, wonder, and gratitude, “to the hole of the pit whence” he was “digged.” Thus the eyes of sinners are opened that God may perform the great work of restoration full in their view, and lead them to see the whole wondrous process step by step; that however others may de-

ny His agency in this work, there may be as many witnesses as there are converted sinners. Thus they are brought to Zion, not like blind machines, but like rational beings, and are illuminated *before* the passage, are illuminated *in* the passage, and are illuminated *after* the passage, that they may make every stage with their eyes open, and see all that is done for them; that they may first distinctly survey the dreary scene without the walls, and compare it with the beauty and glory within; in other words. that they may trace the workings of their own minds before and after, and estimate the greatness of the change, and know the power and mercy by which it was produced,—that entering on the new life with a deep view of their native guilt, ruin, and helplessness, they may begin their course with more humility, dependance, and gratitude, with clearer apprehensions of the sovereignty of grace, with higher admiration of all the provisions of the Gospel, and with minds sufficiently enlightened to ascribe all the glory of their salvation to Christ.

The necessity of *some* knowledge before Regeneration will be set in a strong light by adverting to the case of a *heathen*. Were a pagan to receive a new heart, it could be of no manner of use, except so far as regards his feelings and conduct, very imperfectly regulated, towards his *fellow-men*. He cannot love God, for he never heard of Him; he cannot repent of sin, for he has no knowledge of the divine law; he cannot believe in Christ, for he knows not that such a Being exists. Before the

new life is imparted a body of truth must be formed in the understanding, to prepare the way for Christian exercises as soon as the heart is renewed. This is strikingly illustrated in the vision of Ezekiel.\* It would have been to no purpose to have imparted life to the dry bones in their disjointed state. They could not have seen, for they had no eye; they could not have heard, for they had no ear; they could not have spoken, for they had no mouth; they could not have moved, for they had neither joint nor muscle. Life would have been utterly lost upon them. Before the inspiration of breath the bones must come together, bone to his bone, the sinews and flesh must come up upon them, and the skin must cover them above; and thus human bodies must be organized to exercise the functions of living men. A similar preparation is made before the infusion of life and breath in the *natural birth*. A body is first formed and fitted to exercise the living functions, and then life and breath are inspired. The necessity of a correspondent preparation for the second birth is clearly suggested by analogy. Or to vary the illustration, if you form a design to convert a dungeon into a convenient room for business, you first store it with furniture and admit the light. Or to bring a case still more in point, God in the beginning created the *light* before He formed the *eye*.

\* Ezek. xxxvii. 1—10.

Some knowledge antecedent to Regeneration is then necessary. And it must be more than barely sufficient to distinguish a man from a heathen,—more indeed than any sinner in a Gospel land will acquire in a state of stupidity. One may live with the Bible in his hands all his days without a realizing sense of a single truth, and with no understanding of several things most important to be known before the new birth, such as the enmity and stubbornness of the heart, his desert of eternal punishment, his helplessness and perishing need of a Saviour: and should he suddenly receive a new heart in that condition, he would probably never to the day of his death possess so deep a sense of the native ruin of man, and the sovereignty of grace, nor give so much glory to Christ, as though his antecedent knowledge had been greater. He would be likely, (especially if surrounded by people as ignorant as himself,) to pass through life with very indistinct ideas of the Gospel way of salvation, and never extend a view beyond the outlines of Christianity. Such Christians we must charitably believe there are,—converted with little more knowledge than is common to other stupid sinners; and they labour through life with very confused ideas of the ruin and helplessness of man, the sovereignty of grace, and all the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel. If such are received as brethren, they ought to be contented, and not condemn the views of others who have been favoured with more deep and abasing discoveries than themselves.

It is one of the established laws of the universe that creatures should acquire their knowledge gradually, and not all at once. It does not comport with this law, (nor yet with another by which it is fixed that our sense of things shall be drawn from *experience*,) that the deficiency of antecedent knowledge should be supplied by sudden communications at the time of Regeneration. That deep view of native guilt and stubbornness which is necessary to do honour to Christ and sovereign grace, must be obtained beforehand, and will never be obtained in a state of stupidity. The sinner must be awakened and convicted for a considerable time, before he will know enough of his condition and necessities to ascribe all the glory of his salvation to Christ. And till he is prepared to do this, in an ordinary way God will not change his heart.

This then is the preparation which commonly precedes the new birth. It consists entirely in a *conviction of truth*, and of course is brought about by the immediate instrumentality of the Word, and the means appointed to impress that Word on the mind. Here the work of preparation ends. This is the boundary of all that can be done for unregenerate men. The preparation does not improve, and has no *tendency* to change, their hearts. The bodies in the valley of vision were as dead after their organization as before: nor had the organization the least *tendency* to originate life. This was infused by the wind

which afterwards breathed through the valley. And in the case under consideration, “Neither is he that planteth *any thing*, neither he that watereth, but *God that giveth the increase.*”\* The ancient dispute between Abraham and the rich man in torment whether the most powerful array of motives could change the heart, has convinced thousands in every generation, and me among the rest, that they who for twenty or thirty years can withstand Moses and the Prophets, would not “be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”†

\* 1 Cor. iii. 7.

† Luke xvi. 19—31.

## LECTURE VIII.

### SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

ISAIAH LV. 11.

SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH ; IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID, BUT IT SHALL ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH I PLEASE, AND IT SHALL PROSPER IN THE THING WHERETO I SENT IT.

**III.** I AM to treat of the means and influences by which the Word is conveyed to the minds of the unregenerate.

It is now ascertained that all that can be done for the unregenerate, by their own exertions, or the efforts of others, or the Means of Grace, or the influences of the Spirit, (laying out of account the *prayers* of Christians for them,) is to set home upon their minds the truths of the Word. The question then arises, how far are these several agents and instruments concerned in this effect, and what proportion of the effect is ascribable to a natural, and what to a supernatural operation? It is important to know how to estimate both our dependance on God, and the value of the Means of Grace ; to ascertain, on the one hand, how far we are beheld

to a supernatural influence, and to what extent that influence coincides with the course of nature, and encourages human exertions; and on the other hand, how far means and human efforts are available, and which of the exertions of men, and of the means within their reach, have the fairest chance for success. But let us not lose sight of the effect about which we are inquiring. It is not Regeneration, nor conversion, but simply the *conviction* of the *unregenerate*.

This effect is partly natural and partly supernatural. The supernatural influence, though not so regular in its operation as to reduce it to one of the laws of nature, is so far stated and coincident with the natural order as greatly to encourage human exertions. In illustrating these ideas we shall have an opportunity to contemplate the vast importance of the means and efforts which God has appointed for man.

(1.) The effect is partly *natural*. This at once brings back the question, how far the exertions of the unregenerate themselves, and the efforts of others for them, and the Means of Grace, are concerned in conveying truth to their minds in a natural way. Now it is manifest that all the ordinances of religion address truth directly to their eyes or ears, in a manner perfectly natural. The dispensations of providence suggest truth to their minds in the same direct way, or by means of the association of ideas. The expositions and exhortations of others lay before them the instructions and motives con-



tained in truth. Their own exertions, (except the mere motions of the body,) are all comprehended in the single word *attention*,—attention to truth, and to the means appointed to convey truth to the mind. There is such a thing as an *effort* of the mind to fix its eye on truth, much like the effort of the natural eye to adjust itself to an object, and to pry if the object is indistinct. Without this effort of its own, all the exertions of others to bring truth before it are in vain. A thousand objects may be presented, but if the mind shuts its eye, or turns it another way, it is all to no purpose. It must attend for itself or it will never see. Even the influence of the Spirit, (such influence I mean as is afforded to the unregenerate,) if it could be exerted without fixing the attention, would infuse no light, would produce no effect. Every ray of light must enter through the eye of the mind, and except flashes sometimes produced by more immediate power, must enter while the eye is purposely directed towards the object.

Thus far the process is altogether natural: and according to the laws of nature the effect would be proportionate to the human exertions within and without, and greater or less according to the channels through which the truth was conveyed, and to the means employed to propel it through. There are different channels by which *natural* truths are carried to the mind with different degrees of clearness, such as the external senses, the passions, the imagination, &c. There are different outward

means by which *natural* truths are propelled through these channels with different degrees of force, such as the instructive discourses and passionate addresses of others, including their tones, gestures, &c. But the same instruments and channels by which *natural* truth is conveyed to the mind with different degrees of force, will serve for the conveyance of *spiritual* truth with force in corresponding proportions, though weakened in all its degrees by the resistance which it meets within. Again, it is a law of nature that when the mind turns its own attention to *natural* truth it discovers it, and with a degree of clearness proportioned to the intenseness of its application. By a process equally natural it may discover *divine* truth, with a distinctness proportionate to the degree of its attention, except so far as its vision is perverted by prejudice,—allowing also that the views accompanying every degree of attention will be greatly obscured by unbelief. Now the mind is capable of different degrees of attention, from what may be called simple reflection, up through the ascending grades of meditation, study, and that agonizing reach of soul which is put forth in prayer. In no other sense than as being *the highest degree of attention to truth*, are the prayers of the unregenerate of any use. But as such, when the mind is serious in the effort, they are of all means the most powerful to impress truth upon the conscience,—those truths in particular which the soul struggles most to apprehend in prayer, for instance, those which respect the cha-

acter of God, His relations to us, the vileness, danger, and ruin of the sinner, and his helplessness, made more and more apparent by every straggle to subdue himself and prevail with God. That divine truth should be apprehended in proportion to these several degrees of attention, when ignorance or *special* prejudice does not prevent, is altogether according to the laws of nature. Further, so far as the *attention is turned* to divine things by the mere influence of the Means of Grace, or the exertions of others, or any of those causes which act on the body and induce melancholy, as sickness, affliction, evening, autumn, &c. it is a natural effect. Also, the anxious *feelings* of the sinner which follow in view of truth, appear to be as much a natural effect, (allowing the truth to be first set home,) as the sensation produced by the touch of fire. But

(2.) After natural causes have spent their force, the attention is by no means sufficiently roused, nor the truth sufficiently apprehended, to answer the purpose. There is occasion for the interposition of supernatural power. It was not the voice of Ezekiel, but the power of God, which *organized* the bodies in the valley; and it is the office work of the *Holy Spirit* to "*convince the world of sin.*"\* This supernatural influence answers three ends: First, to bring truth into view without the aid of means. Awakening thoughts are often shot into the mind in a way not to be accounted for

\* John xvi. 8.

on the principle of association, nor from any of the known laws of nature. Secondly, to disclose the sinner's heart to his own view, and thus induce a *self-application* of the truths which come in from the Word. But the principal end is, Thirdly, to counteract that *unbelief* which blinds the mind and prevents a *realizing sense* of truth. This particular act of God, to which I intend to confine my attention, brings no truth before the mind, but only causes what is already there to be *realized*. How this is done we can by no means explain. How a truth which already lies before the understanding is made to be more deeply realized, by an influence which makes no alteration in the temper of the heart, we can no more conceive than how unembodied spirits communicate their thoughts to each other. But it appears to be something entirely different from merely *fixing the attention*. The attention is often closely fixed while no realizing sense of truth is obtained. All we can say is, it is an operation which counteracts the blindness of unbelief, and increases the liveliness of speculative faith. Were it not for this influence, in its more imperceptible operations, unbelief would probably so blind the mind as to produce a total neglect of the Means of Grace, and truth would not be sufficiently realized to turn the attention to divine subjects, and give opportunity for the *natural* causes which have been mentioned to operate. Unbelief would so strongly guard the avenues to the soul, that ordinances, dispensations of providence, and

human eloquence, (which can now send in divine truth by a natural process,) would have no effect. And should this divine influence, combined with natural causes, produce as much belief and attention as can be found in the most decent of the *unawakened*, and go no further, the man would die grossly ignorant of many things important to be known before Regeneration.

This operation which causes truth to be realized, is wholly the work of God, to which no means or human exertions from without can reach a helping hand. And that His agency may be the more manifest, He does not *always* cause the mind to realize what is laid before it, even when its attention is highly excited. Still

(3.) This operation is so far *stated* as to accommodate itself to the nature of man, and encourage human exertions. When motives are presented and pressed upon the mind by ministers and Christians, that is the time which the Spirit ordinarily takes to carry them home to the conscience. Millions of instances, amounting to general experience, and producing an ordinary calculation, attest this. Such an order seems established, not only that by encouraging human instrumentality the best affections of the heart may be called forth; not only that the light which comes from God accompanied with effects so glorious, may disclose its source by being conveyed to the mind through visible conductors; but that men as moral agents may be wrought upon in a way conformable to their

nature,—in a way as nearly coincident as possible with the natural order. And it does in fact very nearly coincide with that. When truths, naturally adapted to interest the existing feelings of the heart, are urged by others, it is a law of nature that the feelings should be interested by them. In the present case unbelief keeps them out, and prevents what otherwise would be a natural effect. It is only necessary that divine power should counteract this unbelief, and then the Word, and ordinances, and dispensations of God, and the appeals of sacred eloquence, will *naturally* move the soul. God really carries sinners through the whole course of conviction by the power of motives, as in every instance of moral suasion, except that He counteracts their unbelief, and so lets the motives in full upon their minds, leaving them then to produce their natural effect. But it is moral suasion still. It is God speaking inwardly to the mind. Not leaving the motives where they dropt from the lips of human eloquence, He carries them in and lays them before the eye of the soul, and becomes Himself the preacher to a new sense. It is still nothing but truth addressed to the mind, as in every instance of moral suasion. The only difference is, that in one case He gives efficacy to truth by the *natural* operations of His power, in a way altogether stated; in the other, by the supernatural, and in a less stated manner. But even in that which is less stated He acts very much in a line with nature,

entering the mind by the ordinary avenues, and pressing natural causes into cooperation, so that to an observer the whole appears often like a natural effect. Thus when the mind is softened by affliction, or put in a frame for serious reflection by causes operating on the body, or by a view of danger, that is the time when it is most likely to come under those impressions which but for unbelief would have been a natural effect. It is upon the same principle that the operations of grace *after conversion* are regulated so much by the peculiarities of different constitutions. Grace sets the man in motion as nature made him, only in pursuit of a new object. Ardent men make ardent Christians, and timid men make fearful Christians.

Upon the same principle the particular *kinds* of address which would be best calculated to impress the mind were there no unbelief, and therefore no need of supernatural interposition, is now best calculated to impress it. God more generally causes the impression which depends on His agency to bear *much the same proportion to the natural power of means* as though it were a natural effect. Thus a pungent exhortation is likely to make deeper impressions than a frigid exposition. The manner best calculated to persuade a reasonable man to do you a favour, is best calculated to prevail on him to be a Christian. When the parent sits down in earnest to press the conscience of his child, and feels that he cannot let him go, he is very likely to

succeed. These things are so ordered, among other reasons, to encourage us to put every wheel of nature in motion for the salvation of men which would promise to be successful if that salvation were a natural effect. Were we not encouraged to make *these* exertions, we could make none at all, except merely by *prayer*; for all our other means, and all our powers, lie within the boundaries of nature. We cannot reach beyond, nor move a step but by her laws. Yet all these means and efforts prove unavailing in instances enough to convince us of our absolute dependance on supernatural power.

Thus far I have applied the principle to the exertions of men for the conviction of *others*; but the coincidence of the supernatural with the natural order will more clearly appear from the use that is made of the sinner's own agency. God carries on the work of conviction, (so far as He is pleased to advance it,) through the sinner's own attention, pouring light through the eye of the mind as it is eagerly held towards the truth, and making the effect to depend on that attention as really as in any other case. To go back to the beginning: the mind of the stupid sinner always has an eye open, however vacantly it may gaze, and truth in the first instance is brought and laid before it by divine or human agency without any effort of its own. At that moment God gives, or neglects to give, a realizing view. If the view is not sufficiently distinct to fix the attention, and the mind



turns its eye away, or fails to adjust it to the object, the view will be gone, or continue very indistinct and only for a short time. All the efforts from without, whether of God or man, do no more than present *objects* of attention, and urge *motives* to stimulate attention, and cause *realizing views* to accompany attention. But if the attention is not fixed the effect ceases. The mind must *see for itself*, or it will not perceive; and it cannot see the object while the eye is turned another way. The sinner must attend to what in the first instance is laid before him, and under the excitement of that motive must put himself in the way to see more, and as new truth is presented must fix his eye eagerly on that, and stimulated by the new motives thus discovered must bend a still more earnest attention to the subject, and so on in a series of increasing efforts, or according to God's ordinary mode of operation he will never be convicted.

All this time the hand of God is behind him, effectually urging him forward by a clear display of motives: and it is *before* him, pouring new light through the eye as it gazes. The first realizing view which fixes the attention is from God. As the attention is thus turned to truth, and by a natural process obtains clearer knowledge, the supernatural influence, counteracting the blindness of unbelief, gives a still more realizing view. The attention thus sharpened gazes with greater eagerness, and the accompanying influence continues to give realizing views of what the mind by its own

effort indistinctly discovers. And more generally the realizing sense, in every step of the progress, is in proportion to the degree of attention which immediately preceded. Not always however. There are exceptions enough to convince the mind of its absolute dependance on supernatural power,—a sense which goes in to constitute an essential part of the conviction desired. Thus by its very *failures* the attention helps forward with the work. So by its failure to conquer the heart, and bribe God by self-righteousness, it brings an increased sense of the stubbornness of the heart, and the need of a Saviour. But it advances the work chiefly by its success, the view following the effort to see as though it were a natural effect. While the mind strives to see it sees; while it gazes with increased eagerness, it sees more and more. Through the sinner's own exertions to frequent places where truth is displayed,—through his prying efforts to see the object in the clearest light, to catch its exact lines and colours,—through the deep attention which he pays to his own wretched character and wretched case, the work of illumination and conviction is carried on. The sinner's agency, though not employed in Regeneration, is greatly employed here. It is as much employed in the progress of conviction, (so far as God is pleased to carry on the work,) as the agency of the Christian in the progress of sanctification,—with these points of difference however: the Christian has a promise and certainty that his agency shall

succeed, the sinner has no promise or certainty at all: the Christian's agency is holy, and connected with a holy result, the sinner's agency is unholy, and connected with no other result than a conviction of truth. But the two cases agree in these three respects: in neither is the human agency the efficient cause: in neither can the effect follow without that agency; in both that agency has a somewhat stated, (much resembling a natural) tendency, by the accompanying influence of God, to produce the effect. These three ideas are perfectly displayed in a single case: Sampson must *bow himself with all his might* to remove the pillars of the house, though the house fell by supernatural power. The power acting thus through his will and agency, gave every appearance of a natural effect. Thus God works "all *our* works in us." We "labour, striving according to *His* working which worketh in" us "mightily." While *we* "work out" our "own salvation," it is *He* that "worketh in" us "to will and to do."\*

IV. I am to treat of the success of the Word in accomplishing, as the text suggests, every end which God designed.

That men are convicted who are never converted, facts abundantly testify. That they return to sin from *every stage* of conviction, is equally evident. In many instances they "quench—the Spirit," and fall away after having been "enlighten-

\* Isai. xxvi. 12. Phil. ii. 12, 13. Col. i. 29.

ed," and "tasted of the heavenly gift," and been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost," and "tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come."\* That God should begin a work of conviction upon the non-elect, is no more unaccountable than that He should send them the Gospel. The design in both cases is doubtless the same. But the question is, Does His power secure the conviction of as many as He pleases, and as far as He pleases? Or is the event left contingent? I shall assume that the work is carried on through the sinner's own attention, that if his eye is not kept anxiously turned toward the truth with a strong effort to see, the whole effect will fail. The question then is, Will God certainly keep up that attention as far as He pleases? And how can He keep it up in spite of all resistance, (without altering the disposition or weakening the resistance,) and yet leave the sinner free?

In this place it is necessary to introduce more distinctly the doctrine of *motives*. Either we must admit the self-determining power of the will, holding in its hand the decision whether to yield or not to yield to motives, or we must believe that the will is *absolutely governed by motives*. The latter is unquestionably the truth, and common sense, instructed by experience, pronounces it true every hour of the day. Common sense, delivered from the labyrinths of metaphysics, pronounces that men always yield to the strongest inducement, and

\* Heb. vi. 4—8.

yet are free. Upon this principle you are constantly calculating the future conduct of men. You feel a perfect confidence that if you offer a miser a bag of money to induce him to walk a mile, and no stronger motive draws the other way, he will comply : and yet you never dreamed that he would not be free. The whole business of the commercial world is conducted upon the same calculation, and so is the whole system of social intercourse. Break up the uniformity of this principle, and leave it wholly uncertain whether a father will move to snatch a child from the fire, whether the friend who meets you in the street will be restrained by a thousand motives from taking your life ; and all the foundations of order and rational action are removed, and the world is transformed into one vast bedlam,—a bedlam in which the maniaeks are as likely to kill a friend to gain a feather as to win a crown,—as likely to kill a friend without motives, and in full opposition to all motives, as to hurt an enemy when most highly induced. This is a new species of madmen, a world of madmen moving in a maze, without a particle of reflection, without any end or object even floating in a distempered fancy. Such a *self-moving will*, (good Lord deliver us !) —such a self-moving will, unharnessed from reason and let loose into the world, would be more to be dreaded than wolves and tigers. In short there can be no rational action a whit further than the will is absolutely controuled by motives : that is to say, a whit further than it has a *reason* for its de-

cisions, and is governed by the considerations which appear strongest and best.

The world then is governed by motives. Of course it is easy with God, without in the least altering the disposition, to exert a perfect controul over all the volitions of men, by only spreading for them a proper train of motives. To recur now to the question: it is only for God to display truth before the minds of sinners, with so much clearness as to create a motive to attention stronger than every opposite motive, and the attention is secured. So long as He continues to exert such an influence, the attention will be kept alive, and exactly in proportion to the clearness and strength of the motives presented. The motives cannot indeed act upon any other than *natural* principles, for none else exist. The sinner will not follow them to the end to which they invite, viz. to holiness; but he will be sure to follow where apparent *interest* calls, and of course to those efforts after deliverance which will fix his eye attentively upon divine truth. Whom therefore God chooses to convict He will convict, and just as far as He pleases, and *that* through their own voluntary attention.

It may then be asked, how far have sinners the *power* to prevent the effect? The answer is, they have complete *natural* power to prevent, as in every other case where their agency is necessary to the issue. This ability however lies not in the self-determining power of the will, but in a power to exe-

cut any opposite decree which the will should issue ; in other words, in a power to turn away the attention *if they are so inclined*. This case is materially different from that of Regeneration, where the effect is wrought without their agency. In this case they have as much power to turn away their attention, and thus arrest the progress of conviction, as they have to stop in a journey when the stronger motive impels them forward, as they have to sit still when the stronger motive solicits them to walk, as they have to refuse an invitation to a feast when urged and entreated by a friend. If the motive which incites them to divine contemplations is not at first strong enough to countervail all others, God will indeed, if He is determined on success, press them with stronger inducements till He prevails. But the whole process is still of the nature of moral suasion. There is no more compulsion in the case than in all the common actions of life ; for all our actions are equally governed by motives. Nor is this particular case at all different from the rest, except that the motives are more solemn, and are made clear to the mind by supernatural power. In a word the sinner is as free to turn away, and thus stop the progress of conviction, and by this means prevent Regeneration, as he is to do any other thing ; but it is certain that he *will not* turn away if God continues to set sufficient motives clearly before him.

## INFERENCES.

(1.) We see the good tendency and absolute need of the sinner's own attention to the Word of God and the Means of Grace,—of his agonizing exertions to understand and gain realizing views of revealed truth. These exertions do not indeed tend to change his heart; but if they are earnest and solemn, and guided by judicious instructions, they do tend, (such is the common mode of divine operation,) to advance the work of conviction, and very much in proportion to their strength. The agonizing reach to apprehend divine things which is made in prayer, has a better tendency than meditation; meditation has a better tendency than bare attention; and the slightest attention of mind has a better tendency than a vacant attendance on means. An attendance on means with an idle, wandering mind, has scarcely any tendency at all to bring home a realizing sense of truth. There is no such spell in ordinances to convict a mind that is roving in the ends of the earth. There ought to be as strong an effort to realize divine things as to extinguish the flames which are kindling on your house,—as to support a rock that must crush you in its fall. There is no more need of strong efforts in these cases than in that, and without exertions approaching to this character there is absolutely no prospect of the sinner's salvation. To sit still without an effort is nothing less than putting the pistol to his



own breast. To neglect the Means of Grace, or to attend on them without a struggle to realize divine things, is as direct a way to destroy the soul, (according to God's usual mode of operation,) as abstinence from food to destroy the body. The only difference is, that now and then a sinner is converted in an extraordinary way without the usual means.

Say not, then, that if you are elected to be saved you shall be saved, whether you make exertions or not. There is no such decree that prevents the absolute dependance of the end on the appointed means. Had not Naaman washed in Jordan, no decree would have healed the leper. Had not the blind men sat by the way side, no decree would have opened their eyes. Had not the impotent man lain by the pool, no decree would have made him whole. Had not the bones been within the reach of Ezekiel's voice, no bodies would have been organized. Had the parts failed to come together, "bone to his bone," no life would have been infused. Or to illustrate the idea by a case still more in point, if a man does not open his eyes he will not see. If he does not turn his eyes towards the object, and pry if it is obscure, he will not see it clearly. Now if it is decreed that his view of the object shall be distinct, it is decreed that these previous steps shall be taken, and the end is no more certain than the means, and will certainly fail if they fail. If it is certain that a farmer will have a crop, it is certain that he will

sow his seed. If it is certain that a man will live to old age, it is certain that he will continue to take food. If it is certain that a man will be glorified, equally so that he will first be justified ; if that he will be justified, equally so that he will be effectually called ; if that he will be effectually called, equally so that he will be convicted ; if that he will be convicted, ninety-nine times in a hundred it is equally certain that he will make the exertions which have been mentioned. And to say that if he is elected he shall be saved whether he use means or not, is like saying, if it was decreed that he should live to old age, he will live though he renounce food, and would though he had never been born.

Nothing then but inevitable destruction awaits those who cast off fear and restrain prayer, who neglect the Means of Grace, or attend on them with a careless mind. Not a symptom appears that such people are ever to be saved, and continuing thus they are as certainly lost as there is a God in heaven.

But after all this whole process is only God using means with the sinner, and not the sinner using means with God. The voluntary agency of the sinner *must* be set in motion, and the indispensable necessity of this may be displayed, to show him the madness of stupidity and to rouse his attention ; but after all in a *moral* point of view his agency is of no account. The whole credit is due to another. It is God that awakens his attention and keeps it awake. It is God pressing an unholy agency into service, as

He did in the case of Pharaoh. The whole is nothing but God struggling with the sinner, and the sinner with all his moral feelings struggling against God. It is God bringing good out of evil, and forcing the selfish agency which is directed against Him to promote His merciful designs. In a word it is God using means upon the sinner, and not the sinner using means for himself. To compare his unholy exertions, (as is often done,) to the lawful means employed by the husbandman, is grossly deceptive, and tends only to foster that self-righteousness which is the principal enemy to be overcome. There is no real resemblance between the two cases. The sinner has never broken up his "fallow ground;" he only sows upon a rock; he plants "thistles—instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley."

(2.) We see on what account there is more hope of awakened sinners than of the stupid, and more of the convicted than of the awakened, and more of those who are deeply than those who are slightly convinced. It is not because they have done any thing acceptable to God, nor because they are interested in any of His promises, nor because they have approached nearer to a holy temper, nor because any of their struggles or acquisitions tend to change their hearts; but because God has begun the preparatory work, and has thus far advanced it. The more advanced it is, the more the evidence that He intends to carry it through.

(3.) We see the good tendency of preaching to sinners, and following them with exhortations and entreaties. These exertions answer two ends : First, to explain and hold up truth before them. It is in vain for them to turn their eye if the object is not presented. Secondly, to furnish motives to stimulate their attention to the object. They certainly will attend if sufficient motives are brought clearly to their view, and they will not attend without. There is then the same need and the same encouragement to throw in motives as in any other case. One thought suggested by a friend when their attention begins to flag, may rouse it again and prove an essential link in the chain of their salvation. The thought would *naturally* sink into their minds if unbelief did not resist ; but the time which the Spirit ordinarily takes to counteract that resistance, is when good men are striving to fix impressions upon their hearts. It is not His usual way to send home *immediate* suggestions, but to apply considerations offered by others. When a solemn truth is laid before them we never know but He may lodge it deep in their conscience. And as so much depends on putting their agency into action, and keeping it in action, every thing that can be done ought to be done for this purpose. The success of these efforts may be expected to bear some proportion to the nature and clearness of the truths suggested, and to the earnestness and address with which they are enforced. There is then every encouragement, and it is of infinite im-

portance, for ministers to labour in season and out of season ; for friends to speak often one to another ; for parents to teach and exhort their children when they sit in the house, and when they walk by the way, when they rise up, and when they lie down. Had not Ezekiel's voice been heard in the valley, the bones would not have lived.

(4.) We learn from our subject the *manner* in which sinners ought to be addressed.

First, we see the infinite importance of declaring to them *the whole counsel of God*, comprehending all the motives that can rouse their attention, and all the considerations that can affect their hearts. The more plainly and fully the truth is displayed, the greater the prospect of their salvation. It is not to offer instruction in loose and general terms ; it is not to sketch the mere outlines of the Christian doctrine ; it is not to deal out a few scraps of morality ; but particularly and clearly to lay open all that God has revealed. It is not to ring perpetual changes on a few party shibboleths,—a few abstract doctrines ; we must present the objects of religion in all their affecting attitudes ; we must display the truths of God in all their pungency and point, and pour all the motives of Christianity upon the heart. This leads me to say,

Secondly, we have as much encouragement as in any other case to use an interesting, impressive manner, (the manner adapted to the nature of man,) as being calculated not only to waken attention, but to seize all the natural avenues to the

soul. Such is the coincidence between the supernatural and natural order of divine operations, that this manner promises by far the greatest success.

Thirdly, we learn the importance of urging upon sinners the duty of *immediate* submission, as best calculated both to rouse their highest attention, and to present to their view the most powerful and direct means of conviction. The only end of preaching to that class of men is to produce attention, and through that, conviction,—conviction, in the first place, of their obligations, guilt, obstinacy, helplessness, and perishing need of a Saviour, and then, of the truths relating to the Saviour and the way of acceptance by Him. The first thing, besides exciting some degree of attention, is to lay open their *obligations*. From this results a sense of guilt. From a view of their obligations and reluctance arises a conviction of obstinacy, helplessness, and ruin. From the whole follows a deep apprehension of their need of a Saviour; and that is sure to produce the highest state of attention. The beginning of the whole process, (except a partial excitation of the attention,) is to awaken a sense of obligation. Now the foundation of all sense of obligation must be laid in a view of the *claims* of the moral Governour of the world,—claims not at all impaired by the indisposition of man. And what are His claims? He “*now commandeth all men every where to repent.*” “*Now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and*

with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your *heart* and not your garment, and turn unto the Lord your God.” “Submit yourselves—to God;—cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your *hearts*, ye double-minded.”\* If such are the claims of God, and such obligations really lie upon sinners, the readiest way to make them feel their obligations is to urge them to the immediate performance of these duties. If they *ought* to repent without delay, then the readiest way to make them feel what they owe is to urge them to immediate repentance; and this will at once show them their reluctance, obstinacy, and ruin. That they will not yield to this requisition is no objection to its being urged. God never sent the Gospel with an expectation that it would of itself conquer the hearts of men, but by opening to them His character and claims to convince them of their ruin and need of a Saviour. And which, I ask, has the most tendency to produce this conviction, to exhort them to a mere use of means, or to press upon them their full obligations to God? If you would thoroughly convince them of their guilt, hardness, and helplessness, you must not lower down their obligations to a few outward observances, while you leave them ignorant of God’s high and holy claims; you must set the standard high. If you tell them to *do the best they can*, (in other words, the best that they are *disposed* to do,) *that* they will easily perform, and in the trial find no evi-

\* Joel ii. 12, 13. Acts xvii. 30. James iv. 7, 8.

dence of the stubbornness of their hearts. That they will easily perform, and then yield to the strong propensity of nature to sleep upon the pillow of self-righteousness. This is not the way to bring sinners to the foot of the cross; nor is it the readiest way, as abundant experience testifies, to secure even an attention to means. Uncover *all their obligations* if you would drive them to their knees,—if you would compel them to the sanctuary and their Bibles. But you say, Why exhort sinners to do what you know they will not do without a constraining impulse? I answer: if this is not allowed, we may not even urge them to a serious use of means. But the fact is that God never sent forth His ministers to exhort sinners to do what they will do of themselves, but to urge upon them what He knew they never would perform without His constraining power. Thus He sent Ezekiel to say, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord,” when He knew that the bones would never hear without His supernatural interposition. And this command was a sufficient warrant and encouragement to the prophet. If He should bid me go and preach to the dead in yonder grave-yard, I would go. With no other encouragement I now stand over this valley of the slain, and say to the dead of my people and kindred, Come out of your graves, ye bones that are “very dry.” “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Amen.



## LECTURE IX.

### ELECTION.

EPHESIANS I. 4, 5.

ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE; HAVING PREDESTINATED US UNTO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL.

It has been proved in former Lectures that men by nature are destitute of holiness, are supremely selfish and enemies of God, and so remain, without any approach toward sanctification, without any abatement of their enmity, without any feelings or actions otherwise than sinful or indifferent, without any prayers that God will hear, without any thing that tends to a change of heart, until the very moment of Regeneration; that the work of conviction in every case is carried on just as far as God pleases, the cooperation of the sinner to that extent being secured by the controuling influence of motives; that Regeneration is produced by the supernatural and immediate power of God, unaided and uninduced by the sinner, and notwithstanding his unabated resistance to the last;

that in every instance where this power is exerted Regeneration follows ; that of course it is exerted upon some and not upon others,—not because the favoured ones have better improved antecedent grace, or have been more ready to yield, or have induced or aided God, but because He “will have mercy on whom” He “will have mercy;” that He makes one to differ from another according to His sovereign pleasure, for no other *assignable* reason than “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” All this, I must believe, has been proved; and it completely establishes *the doctrine of Election*, except so far as relates to the *eternal decree*.

Now if God performs all His works *from design*, and is *unchangeable*, the fact of the eternal decree is readily established. The theory of decrees is simply this : **WHATEVER GOD DOES HE ALWAYS MEANT TO DO.** Whatever He accomplishes by *positive* power, He always meant to accomplish; whatever He *permits*, He always meant to permit. This must be true if He acts *from design* and is *unchangeable*. For example, if He creates a world to-day, and does it *designedly*, He always had the same design, or else He has formed a *new* purpose, and is *changeable*. If He produces a new heart to-day, and does it *designedly*, He always had the same design, or else He has formed a new purpose, and is *changeable*. If He makes one to differ from another to day, and does it *designedly*, He always intended to make that dis-

ermination, or else He has formed a new purpose, and is changeable.

The fact that whatever God does He always meant to do, may be argued also from His *foreknowledge*. Did He eternally foreknow that He should create a world? *How* did He foreknow it? He knew that no one could *compel* Him: if He had not *determined* to do it,—if the purpose was unsettled in His mind,—if His resolution was wavering, how did He *certainly* know that He should create? Did He eternally foreknow that He should change that heart to-day? *How* did He foreknow it? He knew that no one could *compel* Him: If He had not *determined* to produce this change,—if the purpose was unsettled in His mind,—if His resolution was wavering, how did He know that He *certainly* should do it?

Take the subject in another view. He foreknew that He should *of His own accord* make a world. On that event He deliberately held His eye from eternity. And could He eternally *foresee* a *voluntary* act of His own, and have no *choice* or *design* about it? Could *you* foresee that you should voluntarily take a journey at a given time, and yet have no choice or design about the event? Is it possible to conceive that God should eternally have foreknown, that of His own free consent and choice He should make one to differ from another, should change one heart and leave another unchanged, and yet eternally have had no purpose or choice about it? I must

assume it then as a point about which no doubt can exist, that whatever He foresaw that He Himself should voluntarily do, He always meant to do.

The only question is, What *does* God perform? What does He accomplish by *positive* power? what does He *permit*? If it is a fact that He changes one sinner, and permits another to take his course to ruin, He always intended to do the same. If it is *not* a fact that He makes these discriminations, then to be sure He never intended to make them. The question wholly turns on what He *actually does*,—whether in Regeneration He really does more for one than another. If He does *not*, and the sinner makes himself to differ, the doctrine of Election falls. But if God actually makes these discriminations between men, (agreeably to the proofs adduced in the foregoing Lectures,) then the doctrine of Election, including the eternal decree, follows with mathematical certainty.

And what special difficulty arises from the *decree*? Is it contrary to human *freedom*? But the decree touches no man till it is *executed*. No decree to make Peter to differ from Judas affected either of them till one was taken and the other left. If while *this* was done both remained free, certainly their freedom was not impaired by the previous purpose. If liberty is infringed it is not infringed by the *decree*, but by the *discriminating act* at the time of Regeneration. But if God can actually change one heart and leave another unchanged without destroying freedom, certainly His eternal

purpose to do this could not destroy it. What special difficulty then arises from the decree? Is it against the divine *character*? But it cannot be wrong to *purpose* what it is right to *perform*. If it is proper to *do* an act, it is not improper to *resolve* to do it. If it is right to change one heart and leave another unchanged, the eternal decree to make this discrimination was right.

The doctrine of Election, thus necessarily deduced from that of Regeneration, is abundantly supported by the Word of God. There we are distinctly taught that God eternally elected a part of mankind, *not on account of their foreseen holiness, but to holiness itself*. “According as He hath chosen us in Him, [in Christ,] *before the foundation of the world*, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE; having *predestinated us unto the adoption of children* by Jesus Christ to Himself, *according to the good pleasure of His will*; to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved;—having made known to us the mystery of His will, *according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself*; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, *being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*; that we should be to the praise of His glory.—For we are His workman-

ship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM." "God hath *from the beginning chosen us to salvation*, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT AND BELIEF OF THE TRUTH." "Who hath saved us, and called us with a *holy calling*, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE, WHICH WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN." "For the children being not yet born, *neither having done any good or evil*, that the purpose of God according to *Election* might stand, *not of works, but of Him that calleth*, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." "WHOM HE DID PREDESTINATE, THEM HE ALSO CALLED." "AS MANY AS WERE ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE BELIEVED." "*We have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you*, THAT YOU SHOULD GO AND BRING FORTH FRUIT, AND THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN."

There are many passages in which Election is asserted in more general terms, without the express idea of its being an appointment to *sanctification*. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, *but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*;" "*according to the eternal purpose* which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Many are called, but few are *chosen*." "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, *but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Fa-*

ther.” “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*” In the commencement of a Christian church at Corinth, God looked on the pagan inhabitants and said to Paul for his encouragement, “I have much people in this city.”

In the ages of eternity a covenant was formed between the Persons of the Sacred Trinity, (commonly called the covenant of Redemption,) in which the Father made over to the Son a definite number of the human race as the reward of His obedience “unto death,” and caused their names, (whatever it means,) to be “written” in the Lamb’s “book of life.” The veil was partly drawn from this transaction in the writings of the prophets, where many promises in the form of an oath were held up as made to Christ; such as that His throne should be established, that He should have the heathen for His inheritance, that He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, that His seed should endure forever. But in the New Testament this ancient covenant is entirely laid open. There we distinctly learn that the faith and hope of God’s elect are founded on a *promise* of eternal life made *before the world began*: “Paul,—an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of *God’s elect*,—in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie *promised before the world began.*” Promised to whom? Not to creatures, for they were not in existence; to Christ doubtless. And for the particular portion of the human race who were respected in this covenant, the Mediator in a special sense

laid down His life : “ I lay down my life *for the sheep.*” Who were the sheep? The very seed whom the Father had given Him in the everlasting covenant, including as well those who were pagans or unborn at the time this declaration was made, as those who were believers or had gone to glory ; to the whole of whom salvation was absolutely secured. “ *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me ; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which GAVE THEM ME is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.*” Elect Gentiles were counted for sheep before their conversion : “ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold ; them also *I must bring*, and they shall hear my voice.” It is explicitly asserted that the identical persons who were given to Christ shall all come to Him by faith, and shall all persevere to eternal life : “ Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, *that He should give eternal life TO AS MANY AS THOU HAST GIVEN HIM.*” “ ALL THAT THE FATHER GIVETH ME SHALL COME TO ME, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.—*And this is the Father’s will,*—THAT OF ALL WHICH HE HATH GIVEN ME I SHOULD LOSE NOTHING, BUT SHOULD RAISE IT UP AGAIN AT THE LAST DAY.”\*

\* Ps. ii. 7, 8. and lxxxix. 3, 4, 19—37. Isai. liii. 10—12. Mat. xx. 23. and xxii. 14. and xxv. 34. John vi. 37, 39. and x. 1—29. and xv. 16. and xvii. 2. Acts xiii. 48. and xviii. 10. Rom. viii. 30, and ix. 11—13. Eph. i. 4—12. and ii. 10. and iii. 11. 1 Thes. v. 9. 2 Thes. ii. 13. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 1, 2. Rev. xiii. 8.



It would be easy to multiply texts ; but if the numerous and explicit declarations which have been quoted are not sufficient to produce conviction, a thousand others would not. Indeed if such peremptory and often repeated assertions of the Word of God are not believed, what is your faith in divine Revelation ? Here I rest my cause,—and without searching for further proof, shall only attempt, in the remaining part of the Lecture, to *explain* the doctrine and vindicate it against *objections*.

Suppose ten subjects of an earthly prince are under sentence of death for treason, and are confined in two separate cells, five in one and five in the other. They have all forfeited their lives, and if they are all executed no injustice will be done them. The prince, a most wise and benevolent man, sees however that it will promote the happiness of his immense empire for five to be pardoned and five executed, and for the whole to be brought about in a way most clearly to illustrate both his justice and mercy. He settles in his mind what he himself will do, and being a *prophet* foresees the conduct of the prisoners. With every part of the issue full in his view, he collects thousands of his subjects to witness the transaction, and repairs to the prison. He orders the bolts and bars to be removed from the first cell, the door to be thrown wide open, and the chains to be struck off. “Now,” says he, “unhappy men, I have put it in your power to come forth. No bars or chains confine you. If you will approach and kneel before

me, and confess your crime, and implore forgiveness, and submit to my government, I will pardon you, and raise you to my throne." "We cannot do it," say they. "Cannot! the door is open, and the chains are off; what hinders?" "We humble ourselves at your feet as criminals, and sue for pardon! we will die first. We were oppressed, and have only made an effort to support our rights." The prince expostulates and pleads with them, but they still refuse. He then appeals to the spectators: "Do *I* cause the death of these unhappy men?" Every voice firmly answers *No*. "Are they not *free* in their refusal?" The whole multitude testify that they *are*. "Can more be expected from *me*?" *Nothing more*, is the universal response. "Will not their blood be upon their own heads?" *Upon their own heads forever*, says the common sense of a world. He bars their prison and orders them to execution. He then goes to the second cell, throws open the door, strikes off the chains, and offers pardon to the other five on the same conditions. They also refuse. He expostulates and pleads with them. They still refuse. He then appeals to the spectators, and receives the same answers. Thus far the cases are parallel. Now we will suppose that the prince possesses power by laying his hand on the prisoners to melt them into submission. He lays his hand on them; they fall at his feet, accept of pardon, and are raised to his throne. No act of their lives was ever more *free*, for they submitted willingly and

with all their heart. Afterwards the prince informs the people that he had foreseen the whole event, and had determined on the course he should pursue, before he left the palace; that in the discrimination which he had made he had been influenced only by a regard for the happiness of his empire; and that to have subdued the first five would have marred the publick good. Now I ask, what have you to allege against that prince? If the publick good required just that exhibition of justice and mercy, would you not have blamed him had he done otherwise? Who was injured? Not those who perished; they only had their deserts: nor were they injured by the mercy shown to the rest. In a case where all had forfeited their lives, had not the prince a right to reclaim and pardon whom he would? to select that number, and those individuals, whose deliverance would most promote the happiness of his kingdom? Whose freedom did he impair? Whom did he defraud? Whom did he compel to die? Nay, as justice to his kingdom would not allow him *forcibly* to reclaim the whole, the prisoners themselves compelled him either to abandon them all to their fate, or to make the discrimination which he did. Had they yielded *of their own accord*, as they ought to have done, he would have had no occasion to do more for one than another. But as it was, he must discriminate or resign them all to destruction. Now if his conduct *at the prison* was right, what have you to allege against his previous *purpose*? Was it

wrong to determine to do a right thing? And how could the prisoners be injured by the *mere design*? They were not at all affected by what was devised in the palace, but only by what was done at the prison.

As I understand the doctrine of Election, this is an *exact* illustration of it. Mankind received from the hand of God full powers to obey Him. They sinned, and forfeited their lives, and were like prisoners condemned to die. The atonement opened all their prisons, and struck off all their chains. The invitation is sent to all. All possess natural ability to comply, (as will be distinctly shown in the next Lecture;) but all refuse. They are entreated, but they still refuse. At this point Election comes in. It is their own fault that there is any *need* of a divine interposition. This necessity they, and not God, created. They ought to comply of their own accord, and not wait to be compelled. They are able, but “will not.” Not a child of Adam will. The whole race will refuse till they die, unless subdued by divine power,—not because they are *too feeble*, but because they are *so bad*. This universal obstinacy, which alone renders a divine interposition necessary, obliges God to decide—whether to save all, or save none, or subdue such a part as His wisdom sees best. He cannot save all consistently with the good of the universe. His compassion will not allow Him to abandon all to destruction. The only choice left Him is to conquer whom He will. This necessity, not He, but the obstinacy of sinners created.

It grows, not out of their *inability*, but out of their *desperate wickedness*. He forces none to hell, they go of their own accord; He only forces as it were a part to heaven. And this He does for as many as the interest of the universe will permit. The rest are left untouched, unshackled, to pursue their own chosen way,—with full power to live, but choosing death rather than life. And now, after salvation is provided for them, and offered to them, and is obstinately refused, does it become them to throw the blame on God, and complain that He *created them to be damned*? He did *not* create them to be damned. He created them to be *saved*; and they have “sold” their “birth-right” for a contemptible mess of “pottage.” The truth is, He foresaw them in existence, and actually refusing, before He had an opportunity to decide whether to subdue them or not. In the order of nature the discriminating decree *followed their refusal*, as the two eternally lay in the divine mind. And in its *execution* the decree does not touch them till after they have existed and refused. In both views the discrimination is to be considered as following their refusal, and not as preceding their existence.

Hitherto I have treated the subject in conformity to the common apprehension, that *succession* and the relations of *before* and *after* are predicable of the divine existence. To this apprehension the language of Scripture is also accommodated. But the objection last started, and many other difficulties,

will be more effectually obviated by recurring to the real mode of God's existence. To Him eternity is but one moment. He knows no lapse of time, and except what relates to the order of *nature*, no before or after. All to Him is eternal now. On the scale of *creatures* there is indeed a before and after. To them the execution of His decrees is in succession. To them an eternal decree is a *pre-determination*. Not so with Him. With Him the existence of creatures was as early as the decree. With Him the purpose and the execution are in the same moment. His eternal decree is nothing but a design existing in one eternal Now,—is nothing but a *present* purpose eternally the same.\* Were it perfectly easy for us to conceive of this mode of His being, we could readily see that the existence and refusal of men stand *before* the discriminating decree, (I speak of the order of *na-*

\* "How can this be," says the objector, "that the existence of God is in one eternal Now? Fifty years ago He did not see me existing at that time, and now He sees me to exist: must not then His views be successive?" Now this is taking for granted what the objector ought to prove, that the time which *to creatures* passed fifty years ago, and the present, are two distinct periods with God. He indeed perceives the scale on which creatures reckon time, and sees them lying along on that scale at different points; but His eternal Now stands equally opposite, if I may so say, to every part of the scale. That this is His real mode of existence, is capable of all the proof that such a subject admits. The idea of an eternal succession of views and exercises, involves all the absurdity of an *infinite number*. It implies also imperfection of knowledge, as it supposes a constant accession of new ideas,—and mutability, as it supposes a continual change. "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. iii. 8.)

ture, the order of *time* is excluded,)—stand *before* the decree, as they are arranged in the divine mind ; that He sees men existing and refusing before He determines, or has an opportunity to determine, whether to subdue them or not ; and that Election amounts only to this,—He finds men in existence and refusing His grace, and then determines whom to conquer, and whom to leave uninfluenced. But when you talk of His *creating them to be damned*, you put the discrimination before their existence, as the two lie together in the divine mind.

That which to creatures is *pre-destination*, is to God only a *present* purpose. It comes out then at last, that the decision made in Election is only the decision of His *present* will, existing the same from eternity to eternity. The doctrine of Election, thus disentangled from our crude conceptions, amounts only to this: it depends on the *present* decision of God, not whether salvation shall be *provided* for sinners, for Christ died for all,—not whether pardon shall be *offered* to them, for it is offered without money and without price,—not whether they shall have *power* to accept, for they are abundantly able ; but, when they obstinately refuse, whether He will make them “willing in the day of [His] power.” If they will not repent, but lay Him under a necessity to compel them or leave them to perish, pray give Him the common liberty of a *man*, to choose for Himself whether to act or not. Allow Him the free-

dom not denied to *slaves*, to determine whether to bestow or withhold a *free gift*. What difficulty then remains? But I hold you to *facts*. You *know*, at this moment, that it *does* depend on His present will whether you shall ever have a new heart. This is a *matter of fact* which you will not deny. Well Election amounts to nothing more,—with this single addition, that His *present* will is the will of one eternal now.

When men are anxious and uncertain about their salvation, they are apt in their approaches to God to conceive of an *old constitution* which binds His hands, and leaves Him no liberty to follow His present choice,—or of an *old catalogue*, in which if their names do not happen to be found, He cannot save them if He will. But this is a crude conception. There is no constitution, or catalogue, or decree, which to *Him* is *old*. The world is now governed by His *present will*, just as though His purposes were all formed to-day,—just as though He now began to be. If He has now a wish to change your heart, there is no ancient decree to prevent. It is His present will that must decide your fate. On that alone you are cast.

From this view of the subject I infer that Election ought not to be regarded as any discouragement to *prayer*. It is only because the vulgar notion of *succession* in God is always intruding, bringing with it the phantom of a decree which to Him is old, that this doctrine has ever been thought to interfere with our encouragements to pray. And



indeed if there was an old decree, or constitution, or catalogue, which bound His hands, it would be in vain to apply to His present will. But no such ancient statute has barred the door of access. The way is now as open to His very heart as though He began to exist to-day. Nor is it inconsistent with His *unchangeableness* that He should be really affected by prayer. If, agreeably to the literal construction of His Word, the prayers which are now offered really affect His heart, it only proves that as they have eternally lain before Him, they have *eternally and unchangeably* affected His heart. If then you can now present prayers fit to be regarded on Christ's account by infinite purity and compassion, there is nothing in the way of His being as readily affected by them as any father is by the cries of his suffering children. He has a heart easily touched with the voice of penitent distress, from whatever quarter it comes. His infinite tenderness, His readiness to listen to every sigh of a broken heart offered through His Son, is a truth in which all His mercy is involved,—for which all His perfections stand pledged. This blessed truth it is your duty to believe, (without any gloomy exception against yourself,) as firmly as you believe your existence. Your sense of it, your confidence in it, cannot be raised too high. This very confidence is the greatest, the most difficult, the most essential effort of faith. Give it full scope, it cannot go too far. Nor is there any thing in Election to depress its flights. Election only touches the

question whether you shall be *constrained to feel this confidence*. But if you feel it, there is nothing in the doctrine to discourage its boldest triumphs. If you have never exercised it before, there is nothing in the doctrine, (unregenerate as you are,) to discourage you from exercising it now. It will only be confiding in an everlasting truth, which the doctrine has no influence to destroy. It is a truth, as unchanging as the perfections of God, that He is ready to hear, at all times, from whatever quarter it comes, the cry of penitent grief and filial confidence offered through His dear Son. Go then directly to His present will, to His inmost heart, with the agony and confidence of Jacob. Do you hesitate and tremble from a doubt about your election? But what has this to do? You know that if you offer *such* prayers you shall be accepted upon *every* plan,—that if you do not offer such prayers you cannot be accepted upon *any* plan. You doubt perhaps whether your prayers are *sincere*: but this has nothing to do with Election; for none but sincere prayers can be accepted whether Election is true or false. Do you find the dreadful proof that your prayers are unholy? Even then you are not delivered over to an *ancient* decree; you are only cast upon His *present* will. If that will which, *self-moved*, let down a hand to raise Abraham and David from unregeneracy, is pleased to pluck you from destruction, you live. Upon *that will* throw yourself in the last resort. Put your life in your hand, cast yourself at His feet, pouring

out this sum of all your hopes, “Lord, *if thou wilt*, thou *canst* make me clean.”

“But in case I am not elected He will not receive me if I go.” He *will* receive you if you go, the decree of Election notwithstanding. Election only touches the question whether you shall be constrained *to go*. But if you go Election does not stand in the way. If you go you will certainly be received. It is the wickedness of unbelief that questions this truth,—a truth in which all the mercy and sincerity of God are involved. It is your indispensable duty to believe it; you are commanded to believe it; you will be eternally punished for not believing it. To doubt it is to charge God with falsehood and perjury to His face. Did you never read that the “faith” without which “it is impossible to please Him,” believes “that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”?\* Be you elected or not, *God is this*,—and you ought to believe it with the most unwavering confidence. You cannot entertain too exalted ideas of His readiness, His eager desire to receive all who truly apply. If you go to Him in the fulness of this feeling, you will find no decree in the way.

From this view of the subject I infer also that Election is not inconsistent with *the sincerity of the invitations to the non-elect*. God never decreed that the invitations should be rejected; but when all men agree to reject them, He only determines

\* Heb. xi. 6.

whom He will make willing. The discriminating decree comes in after the rejection. It stands in this order in the Eternal Mind; it stands in this order when it is executed. To God the decree and the execution are in the same moment; to Him no part of the discrimination is before the refusal, even in the order of nature. It is as though a man were to invite you to his house, with no other purpose than to give you a kind reception, and after your refusal should form other designs concerning you. If we could familiarly apprehend the idea of an eternal *No*, this would be seen to be an exact account of the overtures to the non-elect.

But to pass from the mode of God's existence to the scale of creatures, if any thing lies against the sincerity of the invitations, it is merely the *fore-knowledge* that they will be rejected. But this objection is to be met upon every plan that does not deny the omniscience of God. And it lies equally against the sincerity of the invitations to the *elect* before they are renewed. This objection points its force, not against Election, but against foreknowledge, and equally embarrasses every plan short of downright atheism. The common answer which Arminians give to this objection is, that inasmuch as the sinner is *able* to accept, and is not prevented by God; inasmuch as God is *willing* that he should come *if he will*, and stands *ready to receive him* if he comes, the invitation is to be considered sincere notwithstanding the foreknowledge. Precisely the same is my answer; and if the Arminian scheme

is thus freed from the difficulty, so is the doctrine which I am supporting. I only add to their idea, that God *is able* to conquer the rebel if He will.

But I have another thing to say. God is exhibited in the Scriptures in two distinct characters; as the great physical agent or main-spring of motion, and as the moral Governour of the world, holding in His hands the rights of the Godhead, and commanding, threatening, punishing, inviting, promising, and rewarding. These two departments are so distinct as to belong to two different Persons in the Godhead; the former being the office work of the Spirit, the latter the office work of the Father. Now for the Father to invite those whom the Spirit does not sanctify, implies no more inconsistency than for the Son to mediate for those with whom the Father is displeased. There is no more contrariety in the case than between *desire* and *submission* in a saint. As the act of the Spirit leaves the moral agency of men entire, the Father may reasonably address them as complete agents,—agents as entirely distinct from Him as from each other. There is no exercise of a moral government upon any other principle. No other principle accords with *truth*; for men *are* complete moral agents, and as distinct from God as from each other. And it is no less reasonable for Him to command, invite, promise, and threaten His subjects, than for an earthly prince to do this; and He is as sincere in His invitations and promises, even to those who reject His calls, as any earthly prince

could be. In estimating the sincerity of these addresses, you are to lay out of account the physical agency of the Spirit, since this in no degree interferes with the freedom of sinners, nor with the Father's readiness to receive as many as apply. Lose yourselves in contemplating Him in the simple light of a moral Governour, full of love and mercy, having nothing to do with the work of constraining men, sending abroad His invitations to moral agents fully able to comply, and actually receiving all who come : lay aside the relations of before and after, and consider all this, (both the purpose and the act,) as *only present* ; and then say, are not His invitations to all men sincere ? In this light the whole subject appears, (as many can testify,) to a soul possessed of the lively and realizing views of faith.

But I have one more objection to meet. I hear some of you say, Does not this doctrine make God a *respector of persons* ? This depends on what you mean by the terms. If to confer *unequal* favours on His creatures is to be a respector of persons, He is doubtless such. The fact meets you wherever you turn your eye. He gave more exalted powers to men than to worms, to angels than to men. He passed by those who fell from heaven and provided a Saviour for the human race. He passed by the pagan tribes and sent the Gospel to you. He brings one into the world the child of prayer, to inherit the blessings of a pious family, while another is neglected by profligate parents to grow up "like a wild ass's colt." To one He gives

“five talents,” to another “two,” to another “one.” One man is born to disease and unremitting pain, another to vigorous health. One inherits nothing but poverty and disgrace, another is born to wealth and honour. One is cut down in infancy, another is suffered to reach the utmost limit of human life. One finds uninterrupted success in all the labour of his hands, another seems to live only for disappointment and defeat. Nor is this always the consequence of better or worse management: “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.” If then you mean by respect for persons the holy sovereignty exercised in these discriminations, so far from disowning it as derogatory to His character, the great Proprietor of heaven and earth claims it as His glory and unalienable right. And instead of taking offence at this, all the holy universe pronounce with one voice, “Amen: let none but Infinite Wisdom and Love decide a single event to eternity.”

What then does the Sovereign of the world mean when He disclaims the character of being a respecter of persons? He always has reference to Himself in the capacity of a *judge*, or of a king *rewarding* and *punishing*, and means no more than this, that when He sits on the tribunal to pronounce sentence, or when He distributes rewards and punishments, He will treat men according to their *naked characters*, unbiassed by any other consideration, uninfluenced by any private partialities, as for Jews against Gentiles, for apostles against

common Christians, for members of the Church against infidels, for the learned against the ignorant, for the rich against the poor, for masters against servants, for kings against peasants. That this is certainly His meaning will appear from a single glance at the passages in which the phrase is used. Jehoshaphat said to the *judges*, "Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for men, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment;—for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts," (*bribes.*) Moses said to the people, "Be no more stiff-necked, for the Lord your God is—a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward, [*bribes.*] He doth *execute the judgment* of the fatherless and widow." "Shall even he," said Elihu, "that hateth right govern, and wilt thou condemn Him that is *most just*? Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked?—How much less to Him that accepteth not the persons of *princes*, nor regardeth *the rich more than the poor*.—He *strieth* them as wicked men in the open sight of others, because—they cause the cry of the *poor* to come unto Him.—He respecteth not any that are wise of heart." When Peter beheld the tokens of divine favour to the first *Gentile* converts, he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, *for in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.*" Paul, looking forward to "the day of wrath and revelation of the *righteous judgment*



of God," says. "Who will render to every man *according to his deeds*,—tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the *Jew* first, and also of the *Gentile*; but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the *Jew* first, and also to the *Gentile*; for there is no respect of persons with God." Speaking of the apostles and Christians in the mother church at Jerusalem, he says, "Whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man's person." That is, neither membership in the mother church, nor even an apostleship is regarded by Him who looks only at the naked character. To *masters* and *servants* he says, "Ye masters, do the same unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him." "Servants, obey in all things your masters,—knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the *reward*:—but he that doth wrong *shall receive for the wrong which he hath done*; and there is no respect of persons." But Peter brings this matter to a point: "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons *judgeth according to every man's work*." So when the Herodians constituted Christ a *judge* in the question about paying tribute to Cesar, they say, "Neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly;" pretending to say, that He would give a just *judgment* without partiality even to an emperor.

Turn now to the passages in which the phrase is used in reference to *men*. In every case when thus applied it refers to men appointed to *judge for God*. “I charged your judges,—saying, hear the cause between your brethren, and *judge righteously*:—ye shall not respect persons *in judgment*, but you shall hear the *small* as well as the *great*,—for the judgment is *God’s*.” “Ye shall do no *unrighteousness in judgment*; thou shalt not respect the person of the *poor*, nor honour the person of the *mighty*; but *in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour*.” “Thou shalt not *wrest judgment*; thou shalt not respect persons, neither *take a gift*, [*a bribe*.]—That which is altogether *just* shalt thou follow.” “It is not good to have respect of persons *in judgment*. *He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous*, him shall the people curse.” “To have respect of persons is not good, for for a *piece of bread*, [*a bribe*,] *that man will transgress*.” In allusion to church assemblies held to *judge of controversies* between brethren, James says, “Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ—with respect of persons. For if there come into your assemblies a man *with a gold ring in goodly apparel*, and there come in also a *poor man in vile raiment*; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit thou here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become

*judges* of evil thoughts?—But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin.”\*

These, I believe, are all the instances in which the phrase is found in the Bible, with the exception of a single passage in which it is perhaps improperly introduced into our translation.† And what do all these passages prove? that when God acts in the character of a *judge*, or when He distributes *rewards* and *punishments*, He will treat men according to their *naked character*, unbiassed by any other consideration. But they do not deny the discriminating influence of His holy sovereignty in *forming* that character. If He has none of the unjust partialities of a wicked judge that will acquit the wicked and condemn the righteous, yet has He not a right to bestow a *free gift* on whom He pleases? It is enough for us to know that the exercise of His sovereignty is not arbitrary, nor capricious, nor influenced by private partialities, but by infinite wisdom and love; aiming at no other object than the general happiness. We may rest assured that there is a good reason for every discrimination which He makes, though that reason is not explained to us. And what right has any man to complain? After salvation is provided, and offered, and refused, does it become him to complain that he is not *forced* to accept it? Has

Lev. xix. 15. Dent. i. 16, 17. and x. 16—18. and xvi. 18—20. 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. Job xxxiv. 17—23. and xxxvii. 24. Prov. xxiv. 23, 24. and xxviii. 21. Luke xx. 21. Acts x. 34, 35. Rom. ii. 5—11. Col. ii. 6. Eph. vi. 9. Col. iii. 22—25. James ii. 1—9. 1 Pet. i. 17.

† 2 Sam. xiv 14.

he *merited* salvation, and that constraining influence too, that he thinks himself authorized to complain? Was God under obligation to provide a Saviour? And was He bound moreover to force that Saviour upon you? The truth is that all men deserve to die; none have any claims on God for life; every part of salvation is a free, unmerited gift. And shall not God have the common liberty of a man, to bestow a free gift on whom He pleases? Who is injured by it? The least favoured of His rational offspring suffer no more than they deserve. If you have your deserts, and others have more, what is that to you? Has He not a right to do what He will with His own?

But after all there is one class of men to whom this doctrine will always present insuperable difficulties. They are those who would rather intrust their fate to their own hands than to the hands of God,—who would rather hold the throne than yield it to Him. To people of this description the doctrine can never be cleared up,—for this substantial reason,—it is opposed to their *wishes*. By this class you may expect to be often admonished that the doctrine, if it is true, ought never to be *preached*; because, as they tell you, it is liable to be abused, and may, they fear, discourage men. and tempt them to sit down without an effort. And pray what doctrine is *not* liable to be abused? Must we then suppress the whole? Tell me another thing. Has *God* revealed this truth? and has He done it for the benefit of the world? and are

you wiser than God? Has He any where authorized His ministers to cover a part of His Revelation? If not, can your advice be a sufficient warrant? Do you think yourself authorized to give advice in a case which God has decided? Take a little more liberty, and advise the Author of the Bible to recall a part of His Revelation.

But shall I tell you some of the *ends* that may be answered by preaching this doctrine? One important end is to detect hearts which are unwilling that God should reign,—to lay open those smooth, selfish spirits which, while they cry Hosanna, are hostile to the dominion of Jehovah. The more fully God and the system of His government are brought out to view, the more clearly are the secrets of all hearts revealed. Another end is to show the world their real condition, their absolute dependance, and what they owe to the grace of God. If it is a fact that sinners are so obstinate that they must be subdued, ought they not to know it? If it is a fact that God “worketh all things after the counsel of His own will,” shall this important part of His character and administration be concealed? If His eternal covenant with His Son, and the whole economy of grace, are what they have been represented, shall men be kept ignorant of truths which constitute so large a part of the glory of God, and furnish so vast a proportion of the themes of their everlasting praise? Shall not sinners be told that every part of their salvation comes from God? and shall not saints be allowed

to know who has made them to differ? Shall the Church lose the happiness of seeing God on the throne, and the immortal interests of all men in His hands? Shall not a universal world be taught to ascribe their whole salvation to Him, and to lay their honours at His feet? Tear not from me—I had almost said, the *sweetest* truth of the Christian system! Deny me not the happiness of knowing my obligations, and blessing my Deliverer! Hide not from my eyes *the only foundation of human hope*!

## LECTURE X.

### THE PLEA OF INABILITY CONSIDERED.

MATTHEW XXV. 24—27.

THEN HE WHICH HAD RECEIVED THE ONE TALENT CAME AND SAID, LORD, I KNEW THEE THAT THOU ART A HARD MAN, REAPING WHERE THOU HAST NOT SOWN, AND GATHERING WHERE THOU HAST NOT STROWED ; AND I WAS AFRAID, AND WENT AND HID THY TALENT IN THE EARTH : LO, THERE THOU HAST THAT IS THINE. HIS LORD ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, THOU WICKED AND SLOTHFUL SERVANT ! THOU KNEVEST THAT I REAP WHERE I SOWED NOT, AND GATHER WHERE I HAVE NOT STROWED ! THOU OUGHTEST THEREFORE TO HAVE PUT MY MONEY TO THE EXCHANGERS, AND THEN AT MY COMING I SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED MY OWN WITH USURE.

THERE is a certain plea, often found in the mouths of sinners who hear the Gospel faithfully preached, the falsity and wickedness of which this parable was intended to expose. The plea is, that God requires more than they are *able* to perform ; that they *cannot* change their own hearts,—*cannot* love and submit to Him : and this they urge as an excuse for doing *nothing*. The parable represents this as the common retreat of *every* sinner under the Gospel. It divides the Christian world into two parts, those who faithfully improve different

talents, and those who call God a hard master. It puts this pretence into the mouth of every cast-away. And where the divine requirements are clearly urged, this is the plea of every unregenerate man. If any thing was wanting to complete the proof of Total Depravity, this universal disposition to accuse God would furnish the supplement. The plea is *false, impious, ruinous, insincere, at variance with other things uttered by the same lips, and self-condemning if true*. These are the points which I shall attempt to establish.

(1.) The plea is *false*. It is not true that God requires of sinners more than they are able to perform. It is not true that they *cannot* love and submit to Him. They have ample power, and nothing prevents but their desperate wickedness.

But the ability which is ascribed to them ought to be distinctly explained. It is a *natural* ability, in distinction from a *moral*. By moral I mean that which *bears relation to praise or blame*. Whatever impediment is *blamable*, is a moral difficulty; every other is natural. Now if there is no difficulty in the way of their loving and submitting to God but what they are *to blame for*, there is no *natural* inability; and if there is no natural *inability*, there is natural *power*. If nothing hinders but what is a *moral evil*, for the existence and *continuance* of which they are to blame, then there is no natural or *blameless* inability. If the impediment is moral or blameworthy, it cannot be natural or blameless: and where there is no natural *inability*, there



must be natural *power*. If they could readily obey were there no faulty cause to prevent, then it is proper to say that they are *able*. This is agreeable to the common language of mankind, and consonant with all our ideas of power in the ordinary affairs of life. If nothing but wickedness prevents the performance of an action, common sense pronounces that there is power. If nothing but stubbornness prevents a child from walking, you say he has power to walk. You speak differently if he is *lame*. Where the difficulty of overcoming an *inclination* is very great, you still say there is power. You tell the drunkard that he *can* abandon his cups; and if he denies, you have only to drop a little poison into his glass, and it may stand by him untouched for half a century. And in a higher case, where no motive can be found strong enough to resist the inclination, you have the same reason to speak of the power: for in the case of the drunkard you pronounce him able *before the successful motive is applied*. And if you declare him able in the absence of the motive, you may as truly pronounce a sinner able to love God who has no *disposition*. For the sinner can as easily love without a disposition, as the drunkard can change his habits without a constraining motive,—indeed as easily as a man can stop in a journey while the stronger motive urges him forward.

The single question is, whether there is any difficulty in the way of loving God but what sinners are *to blame for*. As they possess understanding,

will, and affections, and are capable of loving and hating, it will be allowed that nothing prevents but a wrong temper of heart,—nothing, (as has been proved in former Lectures,) but supreme selfishness, producing an implacable opposition, too deep and powerful to be overcome but by the Spirit of God. Now is this opposition a misfortune or a fault? A fault surely: for if disinclination excuses from duty, all the sin in the universe is excused, and is no longer sin. If in proportion as the heart is opposed to right it is exonerated from blame, God cannot make a creature capable of sinning. If sin exists any where it must be in the *heart*. The motions of the body, considered otherwise than as indications of the heart, bear no more relation to praise or blame than the motions of a clock. But if there is sin in the heart, it must consist in the *opposition* of the heart *to good*. If that opposition, (the essence of all possible sin,) is really an excuse, then sin is an excuse for itself, and is no longer sin,—the difference between sin and holiness is no more,—both are extinct, and men are machines. If disinclination excuses from obedience, then every *law* requiring men to cross their inclinations is oppression, and punishment is tyranny. Every trace of a moral government, indeed of every other government, ought to be obliterated, and but one law remain to the universe, and that be for every creature to do as he pleases. The malignity of devils is no more sinful than the fury of lions, and the love of seraphs no more praise-

worthy than the mildness of lambs. The moral Governour has lost His throne, and is no more than a shepherd among a flock of sheep and goats. To all this horrid length you are pushed the moment you attempt to hold up the opposition of the heart to God as an excuse instead of a crime,—the moment you deny it to be the very essence of all sin.

And consider, I pray you, how it must appear to the Majesty of heaven and earth for you to stand forth and plead, that you *cannot* discover any “form” or “comeliness” in Him why you “should desire Him”? Is He then so unlovely that a rational mind *cannot* love Him? What, cannot love the infinitely glorious God, your Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer! Have you *such a heart as this*? And your heart is *you yourself*. Are you then such a wretch, that all the motives which three worlds present cannot prevail on you to love the blessed God! It is an everlasting blot on creation that a second word need be uttered to induce men to love that Being whom all heaven adore. And are you such a wretch that all the motives in the universe cannot persuade you, and you must be *compelled*? What an eternal reproach to the name of man! And do you offer this horrid temper as your excuse? Is this your plea? I call heaven and earth to witness that this is pleading GUILTY. “How can I love God?” How can you *help* it? How is it possible to avoid loving such a Being? Cannot! You can love every thing else. You can love *sin*, the most loathsome of

objects. And is it harder to love infinite loveliness? How think you this plea will appear at the Judgment of the Great Day? When God shall arraign you, and charge you with being His enemy, and you shall plead that you *were* His enemy, and so much His enemy that you *could not* love Him, what will He say? Our text tells you what He will say: "Thou wicked and slothful servant!" and will then command you to outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you risen up against God and the universe, and committed sins deserving of eternal "shame and contempt"? and do you now ask, How can I *repent*? How can you *help* dying with shame and self-loathing? What should you think of a man who had murdered his father and mother, and could not be sorry? Has the Son of God died to redeem you, and then spread before you the most incontestable proofs of His mission and death? and can you not *believe*? Can you not make one thank-offering to dying love? Can you not help being His *enemy*, and trampling His blood in the dust? Are you such a monster of ingratitude and wickedness? And do you still ask, How can I repent?

You admit *in general* that you are to blame for your opposition to God; but it has risen to *such a pitch* that you cannot subdue it, and from this task you think you ought to be excused. And has it come to this, that a man is to blame for committing murder once, but if he commits

it ten times, and forms the habit, he may murder with impunity? Or to confine the view to operations of the *mind*, will you say that a man is to blame for hating his neighbour *a little*, but if he hates him *much* he is excused? Is it not manifest to common sense that the more he hates the more inexcusable he is? And on the same principle if the sinner's opposition to God rises so high as to be unconquerable but by divine power, he is on that account the more abominable and hell-deserving. And does he think to plead in extenuation the very thing that aggravates his guilt?

But there are no bounds to this plea. If you accept it as an excuse for not loving and submitting to God, and only exhort the sinner to be convicted, the same plea comes up again,—he cannot convict himself. Press him to be awakened, and he cannot awaken himself. Urge him to a serious and earnest use of means, and he cannot be serious and earnest of himself. Tell him to try,—to bind his thoughts to divine subjects, and he cannot bind his thoughts himself. Quit the ground of religion, and beseech him only to govern his turbulent passions, and he cannot; to break his bad habits, he cannot; to resist temptation, he cannot; to break away from wicked companions, he cannot; to avoid swearing, drunkenness, uncleanness, still he cannot. There is nothing that he can do but sin with all his might. This is no picture of the fancy. At all these points men have stood. and are daily stand-

ing to protect themselves with the tyrant's plea of *necessity*. And which of the whole fraternity makes out the best excuse, it would be hard to determine.

Not one of you would admit this excuse in a plea *against yourself*. If one should indulge a spirit of unreasonable enmity against you, you would hardly accept it as an apology that he hated you so much that he *could not* love you. When the plea is *against* you, you judge one way; when it is *for* you, another. How manifest it is that your judgment is perverted and blinded by self-love. From that prejudiced tribunal I appeal to common sense. Does not common sense decide that men are without excuse for hating the greatest and best of beings? And if you would allow the Bible to enter its voice in a question between you and its Author, *that* would settle every doubt. The Bible uniformly treats the evil propensities of the heart as utterly without excuse. It every where speaks in terms of the most pointed reprobation of those who are lovers of their own selves, lovers of the world, lovers of pleasure, proud, high-minded, envious, wrathful, hard-hearted, impenitent, unbelieving, without love to God. If men are not to blame for these evils of the heart, we want a new Bible, a new moral government, a new God!

Only grant me that it is inexcusable to *disobey the positive commands of God*,—commands addressed to *you*, and issued in full view of all your embarrassments, and it is settled that you are without

excuse for not instantly loving and submitting to Him. That such an immediate submission is required, I shall presently show, and shall now assume. Here then is a state of things which *must* bring blame on the Lawgiver or on you. If you have a good excuse for not obeying these commands, they ought not to have been issued, and then the blame falls on Him; if you have no excuse, the blame rests on you. I know you are striving by all these self-justifying pleas to fasten it on God; but I shall deem it no assumption, after all that has been said, if I clear my Maker and lay the blame on you.

This brings me to the end of my argument, and shows that there is no difficulty in the way but what you are *to blame for*,—none therefore but of a *moral* nature,—therefore no *natural inability*,—of course you must have *natural power*.

Having arrived at this conclusion, I shall proceed to confirm it by other considerations. The Bible, (if you will allow me to quote that authority in a controversy between you and its Author,) represents men as possessed of natural power, and ascribes all their embarrassment to the depravity of their hearts or wills. “O foolish people, and without understanding, which *have eyes and see not*, which *have ears and hear not*.” “Thou dwellest in the midst of a *rebellious* house, which *have eyes to see and see not*, they *have ears to hear and hear not*, FOR THEY ARE A REBELLIOUS HOUSE.” “Bring forth the *blind* people that *have eyes*, and the *deaf*

that *have ears*.” “They are like the deaf adder that *stoppeth her ears*; which *will not* hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely.” “Thus saith the Lord,—In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, and *ye would not*.” “Ye *will not* come to me that ye might have life.” “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not*.” “Those my enemies which *would not* that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.” “*This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved.*” The moral Governour every where disclaims the principle of requiring men to go beyond their power: “If there be first a willing mind it is accepted, *according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*”\*

But is it not said, “No man *can* come to me except the Father—draw him”? I answer, the Scriptures often use the word *cannot* to express nothing more than a strong disinclination. “Haste thee, escape thither,” said the angel to Lot, “for I *cannot* do any thing till thou be come thither.” Joseph’s brethren “hated him, and *could not* speak

\* Ps. lviii. 4, 5. Isai. xxx. 15. and xliii. 8. Jer. v. 21. Ezek. xii. 2. Mat. xxiii. 37. Luke xix. 27. John iii. 19, 20. and v. 40. 2 Cor. viii. 12.



peaceably unto him." "The tabernacle of the Lord,—and the altar of the burnt offering, were—at Gibeon; but David *could not* go before it to inquire of God, for he was *afraid* because of the sword of the angel of the Lord." "*Can* that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?" "My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am *not able* to look up." "I am so troubled that I *cannot* speak." "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind *could not* be towards this people." "*Can* two walk together except they be agreed?—The Lord hath spoken, who *can* but prophesy?" "How *can* ye being evil speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "Ye can discern the face of the sky, but *can* ye *not* discern the signs of the times?" "Having eyes full of adultery, and that *cannot* cease from sin." "*Can* the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?" "This is a hard saying, who *can* hear it?" In none of these passages does the word denote any thing more than a strong disinclination. So when it is said, "No man *can* come to me except the Father—draw him," the meaning, as it is explained by the same lips, is only this, "Ye *will not* come to me that ye might have life."\*

\* Gen. xix. 22. and xxxvii. 4. 1 Chron. xxi. 29, 30. Job vi. 6. Ps. xl. 12. and lxxvii. 4. Jer. xv. 1. Amos iii. 3, 8. Mat. xii. 54. and xvi. 3. Mark ii. 19. John v. 40. and vi. 44, 60. 2 Pet. ii. 14

The denial of the sinner's power leads directly to the grossest scheme of *futility*. This will appear from the three following remarks :

[1.] Sinners have as much power to *change their hearts* as they have to alter at once any of their worldly or social dispositions. That earthly objects can offer motives more congenial than the truths of religion to their general tempers, alters not the case ; for it has been proved that no disposition is changed by *motives*.

[2.] Sinners have as much power to *love God*, as they have to exercise *feelings* opposite to any of their worldly or social dispositions. The numberless changes which take place in their worldly and social feelings while their dispositions remain the same, furnish no proof that their feelings and dispositions ever disagree ; for different feelings, under different views and motives, will grow out of the same disposition, and equally accord with it. For example, new views of your neighbour's character may remove prejudice, and excite kinder affections towards him ; or your regards may be changed by conduct in him more gratifying to your self-love ; but your antipathy and love, in this case, grow out of the same disposition, only under the influence of different motives.

[3.] Sinners have the same power to *obey God*, as they have to yield, in the common affairs of life, to any motive which at present, through the badness of their disposition, does not controul them. It has been proved that the strongest mo-

tive, (that is, the motive which has most influence with the existing disposition,) absolutely controuls the affections, the will, and the conduct. A man by reflection may bring new motives before him, which may occasion alterations in all these ; but in every stage his feelings, decisions, and actions will be shaped by the motives which have most influence with the disposition.

Now combine these three ideas in a single case. A man, under the influence of a bad disposition, and wicked feelings thence arising, finds stronger motives to desert his family than to stay at home. Of course he will desert them. On his way he is overtaken by a friend who has come after him to persuade him back. But it happens that all the motives which are urged have less influence than those which hurry the wretch away. I ask now whether that man has *power* to return? *Can* he yield to the *motives* presented? He will not yield while his *feelings* remain the same. *Can* he alter his feelings? He will not alter them while his *disposition* remains the same, and the same motives, with the same degree of clearness, are before him. *Can* he change his disposition? In a word, *can* the man, while assailed by no other motives, alter his purpose and return? If you say he has not power, you decide that no man *can* feel or act in *any case* differently from what he does : and what is this but establishing a system of the grossest fatality? If you say he *has* power, precisely in the same sense are sinners able to love and obey God.

Accordingly the Bible from first to last treats them as beings possessed of ample power. It *invites* them : “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” “The Spirit and the bride say, Come ; and let him that heareth say, Come ; and let him that is athirst come ; and *who-soever will*, let him take the water of life freely.” It *expostulates* with them : “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live : turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for *why will ye die*, O house of Israel ?” It *laments* over them : “O that they were wise ! that they understood this ! that they *would* consider their latter end !” “He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”\* And after all have men no more power to turn to God than to make a world ? Do these heavenly entreaties only mock their miseries ? Do they only tantalize unhappy prisoners bound with fetters of iron ?

But this is not the worst. God absolutely *commands* sinners to love and submit to Him, to repent and believe the Gospel. The law, which was “not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient,” which “was added because of transgressions,” says to every sinner, “Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with

\* Deut. xxxii. 29. Isai. xlv. 22. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Luke xix. 41, 42. Rev. xxii. 17.

all thy soul, and with all thy might." And what says the Gospel? God "now commandeth *all* men every where to *repent*." "*Repent ye and believe*." Sinners are even commanded to *change their own hearts*: "*Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die?*" "*Circumcise—the foreskin of your heart*." "*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*." "*Rend your heart and not your garments*." "*Purify your hearts, ye double-minded*."\* These things God commands: and does He require impossibilities? Then sinners have got their case in the long dispute which they have been carrying on with their Maker.

Nor is this all. God not only commands, He solemnly *threatens eternal death* in case of disobedience. "*If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha*." "*Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish*." "*He that believeth not shall be damned*." He not only threatens, but He *executes*. He actually sends sinners to eternal perdition for no other reason than because they do not obey these commands. And still are they unable? Are they eternally punished for not doing impossibilities? What then do you make of God? Were you to see a master beating his servant a whole day together for not lifting a mountain, you would say the man was mad. And does God lay upon His creatures eternal punish-

\* Deut. vi. 5. and x. 16. Isai. lv. 7. Jer. iv. 4. Ezek. xviii. 31. Joel ii. 13. Mark i. 15. Acts xvii. 30. Gal. iii. 19. 1 Tim. i. 2. James iv. 8.

ment for not doing what is utterly impossible? Is this the God whom angels love and adore? Nero was a lamb to this!

Some have attempted to justify this supposed conduct of the Most High, by alleging that sinners *have destroyed their own power*, and may therefore be justly held bound to do all that they originally were able. "If a servant," say they, "has cut off his hands to avoid labour, may not his master still require his task, and daily punish him for neglecting it?" I firmly answer, *No*. He may punish him for *disabling himself*; (that is *the whole of his crime*;) but if he daily abuses the cripple for not performing his task after it has become impossible, he is a tyrant and a monster. But the case is still stronger when you take into account the *entailment* of depravity. The servant did not cut off his own hands: his mother in a sinful enterprise fell with him before he was born, and he was brought into the world a cripple: and now he must be unmercifully punished every day of his life for not employing limbs which he never had. Is this a picture of the moral government of God! Read any page in the Bible, and then say,—is this the government which that book describes?

I hear some one say, You may *reason* me down, but after all it is a *matter of fact* that I cannot. *How do you know this?* Did you ever *try*? Did you ever *try with all your heart*? Have you ever done *as well as you could* for

a *single hour*? For a single hour did you ever keep your thoughts as much on God, and exert as much earnestness in prayer, and feel as kindly towards God and man, as you were able? Have you done this for a whole month together? Have you done it through life? If not, it is not for you to complain that you have no power. No power! Alas! as you use power you have *too much*. You have power to *resist*,—to resist so vigorously that nothing but the arm of God can conquer you. This is the only thing that prevents you from loving and submitting to Him. Do you not resist? Why it is as plain as light that you will not even be *convicted*. What is conviction? It is a deep sense of being *without excuse*. And when we attempt to penetrate you with this sense, here you are defending yourself against it with all your might,—and then turn and complain that you have no power! The truth itself would have convicted you long ago if you had not resisted. Like the ever-flowing light of heaven, it would freely have come in at your window if you had not barred the passage. “*This is the condemnation, [not that you cannot obtain light, but] that light is come into the world,*” and you have “*loved darkness rather than light, because [your] deeds were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov’d.*”<sup>\*</sup> So the nightly thief, for whom you are searching

\* John iii. 19, 20.

in your apartments, will endeavour to strike the lamp from your hand lest the light should detect him. The truth is you cannot bear to take the blame upon yourself. You will cast it upon Adam, upon God, any where but where it ought to lie. And after all these exertions to resist conviction, you will make a long list of excuses for not being convicted, and lament over it as your misfortune and not your fault. But, (to turn the subject over for another view,) pray what prevents that deep sense of divine things which is the conviction itself, but your *unbelief*? And is unbelief to be admitted as an excuse for stupidity? Does God regard it in the light of an excuse? No, He charges it upon you as your own proper crime, a crime of the deepest die. He pronounces it worthy of eternal rebuke, and solemnly declares, “He that believeth not *shall be damned*.” Such is the enemy which bars your heart against conviction; and when an attempt is made to dislodge the foe, you stand forward to protect it by your thousand excuses; and then say, you would give the world to be convicted but have no power.

(2.) This plea is *impious*. It casts all the infamy of the sinner’s rebellion on God, and imputes to Him a character which the veriest tyrant on earth would blush to own,—a character, I may say, as black as Satan himself. The language is, “I knew thee that thou art a hard master, requiring more than thy creatures can perform,



and punishing them with eternal torment for not doing impossibilities. By offering life on such conditions, thou hast only mocked my misery; and though I must suffer forever, I still affirm that for missing salvation I am not to blame." The great point in dispute between you and your Maker is, who shall bear the blame. He lays it upon you, you cast it upon Him. On this question the parties are fairly at issue. Blame, absolutely *infinite*, must attach to one or the other; because *endless* misery is actually threatened and inflicted. If that misery is not deserved, infinite blame attaches to Him who inflicts it; if it is deserved, infinite guilt rests on the sufferer. God declares that He will lay all this evil upon you for not making to yourself a new heart, not loving and submitting to Him, not repenting and believing the Gospel. In this He charges infinite guilt on you. You affirm that you cannot perform these duties, and are not to blame for the neglect. In this you accuse Him of being the greatest tyrant that ever alarmed a distempered imagination. Here then is perfect war. No two men were ever more earnestly at strife. And yet you say you are not His *enemy*. I appeal to the universe if this is not enmity and war, if this is not *high treason* against God in its most horrid form.

(3.) This plea is *ruinous*. It is only an exertion to steel your conscience against a sense of blame; and while you succeed, you never can be convicted. *While you say you cannot, you*

*never can.* The main difficulty in the way of conviction, and of course one grand impediment in the way of conversion, is this very plea. The removal of it is the conviction itself. The removal of it is therefore clearing away one of the greatest obstructions to your salvation. This obstruction *must* be removed. You *must* take the shame and blame to yourself, and clear your Maker, or nothing can ever be done for you. While you are striving to cover yourself with this excuse, you know not what you do; you are taking the readiest way to ruin yourself forever. If you would not perpetrate the highest act of suicide, *court* this conviction, lie down under a sense that you are without excuse, and draw it upon you with all your might. This is the first step that you can take. If you will not take this, but will stand justifying yourself till you die, you must inevitably perish.

(4.) The plea is *insincere*. The worst of it all is, that after so long abusing your Maker with these horrid charges, you do not believe a word of them yourself. If you did, you would not remain so unmoved; you would be overwhelmed with terrour and dismay. Were a man locked up in a burning house, and knew the key to be in the hands of a merciless tyrant, you would not see him folding his arms, and walking at his ease about the apartments. When we see your knees smite like Belshazzar's, we shall begin to believe you sincere.

But while you continue sporting along the road of life without one anxious thought of God or eternity, we know that your plea is nothing but a pretence to protect your stupidity. You do not even believe that you are *dependant*. Would to God you did! You would not then treat the Sovereign of the universe with all this abuse. You would not then thus boldly cast off fear and restrain prayer. We should hear you crying for mercy with the earnestness of a dying man.—But the insincerity of this plea will be still more evident when we consider,

(5.) How much at variance it is with other things uttered by the same lips. At the moment you urge this excuse, you deny the doctrine of *Election*. Now if what you say is true, that you are as unable to obey the Gospel as a dead man is to rise, certainly your salvation depends on God; and if He is *unchangeable*, it depends on His *eternal* will or decree: and this is *Election*. The doctrine of *Election* follows from your plea in a far more terrific form than that in which I have presented it. And yet you urge the plea and reject the doctrine. You will neither consent to have power yourself, nor leave your fate with God. If we say you *have power*, and urge you to act, you deny, and plead your inability as an excuse for doing nothing. If we say you are *dependant*, (though in a far inferior sense,) and speak of *Election*, (which is an inevitable consequence of your dependance,) you again deny and complain. My dear

hearer, what *do* you want? “We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.” You will neither have it that you can turn yourself, nor that it depends on the eternal, unchangeable God to turn you. How then would you have it? You plainly know not your own mind, and seem settled in nothing but to resist every truth that happens to displease you. To engage in the divine service, is loathsome, and that you will not do; to bear the blame of refusing, you cannot consent; and therefore you take shelter in the plea of inability: to be dependant on God’s eternal choice, is insufferable to your feelings, (though this unavoidably follows from your own plea;) and therefore you oppose Election. The three things which you desire are these; to be excused from the divine service, to be exonerated from the blame of neglecting it, and to hold your fate in your own hands. When you would avoid the imputation of blame, you are willing to have no power; but as little power as you have, you insist on deciding your own fate. We may explain Election till we die, and so long as we leave your destiny in the hands of a sovereign God, you are not satisfied. We may heap proof upon proof to establish the point of your ability, and so long as the argument attaches blame to you, you are not convinced. Whenever you are brought to a serious concern about religion, then indeed the case is somewhat altered. Then your sole desire is to be suffered to do something *short of love and*

*faith*, and to induce God by that means to change your heart and save your soul. To be told that you cannot induce Him by such a withered offering, gives you distress; to be urged to *do more*, you will not consent. But let me tell you that *this hope of moving God by any act that does not rest on Christ*, is the very definition of *self-righteousness*. Yet here you linger, and here you wish ministers to leave you. But if we leave you there, you are undone. If that self-righteousness is not torn from you, it will forever keep you from Christ. We must still follow you with loud and repeated warnings not to stop short of a full reliance on the Mediator; and when you refuse, we must show you that your obstinacy casts you dependant on sovereign grace. And when we do this, you will probably say that we contradict ourselves, and preach that you *can* and that you *cannot*.

(6.) This plea, if it were true, *would only condemn you*. It was a miserable excuse for the slothful servant, that because he expected his lord would require exorbitant interest, he had taken care that he should have none. Was this the way to deal with a hard master who had him in his power? The plea condemned himself. If it were true, he ought to have put his money to the exchangers, and swelled the amount to the last limit of his power. Sinner, this retort was intended for you. If you have a Master in heaven who requires more than you can perform, is this a good reason why you should do *nothing*? why you

should do so much *against* Him? Is it a good reason why you should never pray in your family, and seldom in your closet? why you should not look into your Bible once a week? why you should never attend a religious meeting except on the Sabbath, and then perhaps but once a day? If you cannot change your heart, are you therefore obliged to push God out of all your thoughts? to feel so little reverence for Him and His institutions? to profane His holy day? to utter so many cavils against His Word? to violate so often, in your dealings and conversation, the rule of doing to others as you would have others do to you? to utter so much slander and profanity? and to commit in various ways so many positive sins? To live altogether to yourself, and never regard His glory at all,—is this the way to treat a hard master who has you in his power? Out of thine own mouth shalt thou be judged, thou wicked and slothful servant. If your plea is true, your conduct is mad.

Thus I have finished what was proposed. I have shown that this allegation against God is false, is impious, is ruinous, is insincere, is at variance with other things uttered by the same lips, and is self-condemning if true. And now suffer me to beseech those of you who remain in sin, to renounce this God-provoking plea, and acknowledge yourselves infinitely to blame for not being convicted, for not instantly performing the duties of repentance and faith. Between the full charge contained in this horrid plea, and this frank acknowledgment,

there is no middle ground. It is undeniable that for only remaining unconverted, I may say, unconvicted, this one hour in the house of God, you deserve eternal death. And will you still attempt to justify yourselves and cast the blame on Him? After He has given you full power to serve Him, and redeemed you from death, and offered you life, and pressed it upon you, and granted you abundant light, and you have resisted all, shall He bear the blame, and you be excused? Do you insist on this? Then you and your Maker are at open war. And the contest must last forever, or one of the parties must yield. Shall God submit to you? or will you submit to Him? If this controversy goes to trial at the Last Day, I forewarn you now that the case will go against you. The sentence of every holy being in the universe will be against you. The conscience of every reprobate,—your own conscience,—will be against you. O agree with your Adversary quickly, while you are in the way with Him. “As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God!”

I have told you your *duty*; and for neglecting it you have no excuse. But well I know that till the grace of God subdues you, your obstinacy will resist all entreaties. This casts you at last, *ruined*, *utterly ruined*, *self-ruined*, on the sovereign will of God,—a will which all creation cannot change. At the moment you are supporting this impious warfare with your Maker, mortal man, you are

altogether in His hands ! If He but frown you die. In that condition I leave you,—with these words ringing in your ears, “O Israel, *thou hast destroyed thyself*, but in ME is *thine help*.” O Israel, *thou hast destroyed thyself*, but in ME, in ME ALONE is *thine help*. Amen.



## LECTURE XI.

### PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

ROMANS VIII. 30.

WHOM HE DID PREDESTINATE, THEM HE ALSO CALLED; AND WHOM HE CALLED, THEM HE ALSO JUSTIFIED; AND WHOM HE JUSTIFIED, THEM HE ALSO GLORIFIED.

AFTER what has been proved in former Lectures in regard to Election, the question respecting the Perseverance of the Saints is reduced to this : *Are any regenerated besides the elect?* For if none but the elect are regenerated, none of the regenerate can finally apostatize. I presume no good reason can be given why any should be “created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” who are not to be “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation;”—why any should be raised from the dead only to return to their graves. But our text puts this question to rest. Here we are plainly taught that all who are elected are effectually called; that all who are effectually called are justified; that all who are justified are glorified; therefore that the elect alone are regenerated, and that all

who are regenerated are finally saved. The apostle introduces the subject by saying, “We know that *all* things work together for good, [for salvation, not for destruction,] to them that love God, *to them who are the called according to His purpose*. For whom He did foreknow, [as *His own*, not as being *holy*; for the *predestination which followed appointed them to this character*,] He also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of His Son*, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” The apostle then breaks forth into this triumphant language, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors *through Him that loved us*. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here you see joined in one chain four indissoluble links, viz. Election, effectual calling, justification, and glorification. The elect only are effectually called, and all that are effectually called are glorified.

With this passage before us it becomes manifest that the doctrine of Perseverance stands inse-

parably connected with that of Election. If one has been established, the other follows of course. And since the beginning of the world I know not that any one in his senses ever doubted of the Perseverance of the Saints, who believed in absolute, personal Election.

In another point of view the foregoing Lectures have prepared the way for a ready belief of this article. They have made it apparent that in every step towards salvation *God moves first, and the creature afterwards*,—that men advance just as far as they are propelled by divine power, and no further. The most negligent go thus far, because God is stronger than they; the most vigilant go no further, because in them, that is in their flesh, dwelleth no good thing. The difference between the slothful and the diligent is made entirely by divine influence. If then any of the regenerate apostatize, it is because God changes His conduct towards them, and withdraws His influence. Now they who have maintained the hypothesis of falling from grace, have always told you that *the Christian breaks away from God, not God from him*,—that *till we first forsake God He will never forsake us*; thus placing in the creature the reason that the divine influence does not continue to be effectual. But the truth is, that influence *does* continue to be effectual as long as it is exerted, (as has been proved in former Lectures;) and if the Christian apostatizes, it is because that influence first forsakes him. The old nature is so averse to the heavenly

course, that the best man will not advance a step further than he is propelled ; and so far the worst will certainly go ; for God's propelling hand, if it does *any thing*, overcomes the resistance, and makes His people willing in the day of His power. As far as His sanctifying influence is exerted, it always produces this effect. None are willing further than God makes them willing ; all are willing thus far. If any cease to be willing and apostatize, it is because He ceases to make them willing. The change must commence on His part. No one, I believe, with this view of divine and human agency, ever doubted of the Perseverance of the Saints.

The question then really comes to this : Does God, after changing the hearts of sinners, relinquish the work which He has begun ? and that too as the *first mover* in this process of undoing, and without any *special* cause given Him by the creature ? I say, without any special cause given Him by the creature, for such a special cause presupposes the partial withdrawment of His influence. The best man sins just as far as God leaves him, and opportunity and motives occur ; as far as God's sanctifying influence is exerted, the worst man is preserved from sin. Any *special* sinfulness in a Christian, therefore, presupposes the partial withdrawment of that influence. Does God then, as the first mover in this retrograde course, and unprovoked by any special offence, withdraw from a work which He has begun ? This is the

fair and precise statement of the question. Not whether He will keep us *if we remain faithful*, but whether *He will continue to make us faithful*. Not whether He will desert us *if we provoke Him*, but whether *He will suffer us to provoke Him* thus far. Not what His agency will be *as consequent to ours*, but what our agency will be *as consequent to His*. He began the work when there was nothing in the creature to induce Him, but every thing to dissuade : will He discontinue the work when there is less to dissuade than at first ? In a word, will He begin a work, uninduced by the creature ; and uninduced by the creature, and even less provoked, will He desert it ?

This question however cannot be decided by reason ; it must be settled by Revelation alone. Nor can it be determined by the *general benevolence* of God even as set forth in that Revelation ; for in that exhibition of Himself He sustains the character of One who has in fact withdrawn His influence and left perfectly holy beings to fall. No instance indeed is known, (if the case under consideration is not one,) of His having begun to sanctify *sinners* and withdrawn from the work. But after all the question wholly turns on what He has *promised*,—on the positive stipulations in His covenant with His Son and with His people. If He did in fact promise His Son an elect seed, and inscribed their names in the book of life before the foundation of the world ; if He promised Him that they “should never perish,” that none should “pluck them out of [His] hand,” “that of all

which He<sup>2</sup> had “given” Him He “should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the Last Day;”\* if none but the elect are regenerated, as our text expressly declares; and if the covenant made with Christians engages infallibly to keep them from apostacy; then the Perseverance of the Saints is secured beyond a possibility of failure.

That such a covenant was made with Christ in behalf of His elect, was proved in a former Lecture,† and is confirmed by the texts just now quoted. That compact you may see more largely displayed in the eighty-ninth Psalm, under the typical form of a covenant with David. “I have made a covenant with my Chosen:—thy seed will I establish forever.—Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people.—His seed also will I make to endure forever:—*if His children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from Him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*” Such was the everlasting covenant: and One of the contracting Parties, when He was on earth, (that Beloved Son who never asked in vain,) did, in the most solemn and formal manner, in His official character, lodge in heaven a

\* John vi. 39. and x. 3—5, 11, 14—16, 26—29.

† Page 221, 222.

prayer for the safe keeping of all this elect seed to the end of the world: "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, *that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*—I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.—Holy Father, *keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.*—I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst *keep them from the evil.*—Sanctify them through thy truth.—Neither pray I for these alone, *but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they ALL may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*—And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou—*hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* Father, *I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.*" In accordance with this prayer He told His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

Had not a seed been secured to Christ by such an absolute covenant, He might have entirely lost the reward of His death. He had no security for

a single soul unless the covenant secured the whole. Remove now the immutable purpose and promise of God, and what hinders the whole body of believers on earth from apostatizing at once? The Church may become extinct in a single day. But if things are left thus uncertain, what mean all the *promises* and *oaths* of God respecting the future glory of Zion?

In virtue of this everlasting covenant with the Redeemer, as soon as a soul is united to Him by faith, it receives a sentence of justification which *forever* frees it from the condemning sentence of the law: “Ye—*are become dead to the law* by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.—Now we are *delivered from the law*, (*that being dead* wherein we were held,) that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.—*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me *free from the law of sin and death*.—Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” “The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year



*by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.—Then said He, Lo I come to do thy will, O God.—By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.—For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.* Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, *This is the covenant that I will make with them: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” Though the drift of this passage is to prove that the death of Christ, once endured, was sufficient to take away sin without being repeated, yet the argument is so constructed as strongly to imply, what is explicitly asserted in the text, that all who by a union to Christ are once “justified,” are *forever* delivered from condemnation. Further, by this union men grow to Christ as “*members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones:*” and will He suffer His members to be torn from His bleeding side? At the time this union is formed, they are “*born of God,*” become “*sons*” and “*heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,*” “*to an inheritance incorruptible,—and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for [them,] who are kept by the power of*

*God through faith unto salvation."* Henceforth their title is, "NO MORE *a servant, but a son.*"

When in pursuance of the stipulations with His Son, God came in time to enter into covenant with His *people*, He bound Himself to them individually as their everlasting God and portion, and engaged to take upon Himself the whole charge of their salvation. These promises were not *conditional*, but *absolute*. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater He swore by Himself, saying, *SURELY blessing I will bless thee*, and multiplying *I will multiply thee*.—For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto *the heirs of promise* THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS COUNSEL, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail." The covenant which was afterwards made at Sinai, (called "the law," in distinction from the Abrahamick which is called "the promise,") was *conditional*, and of course was broken. It was conditional *or it could not have been broken*. This is the covenant alluded to in the following remarkable passage: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a *new covenant* with the house

of Israel,—not according to the [CONDITIONAL] covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they broke;—but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, [an ABSOLUTE one:] After those days, saith the Lord, I WILL put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and WILL be their God, and they SHALL be my people;—for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.—They SHALL be my people, and I WILL be their God. And I WILL give them one heart and one way that they may fear me FOREVER. And I will make an EVER-LASTING COVENANT with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I WILL put my fear in their hearts THAT THEY SHALL NOT DEPART FROM ME.” This passage is twice quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews as comprising the tenour of the covenant established with the Christian Church, which is therefore called by the apostle “a better covenant [than that of Sinai,]—established upon better promises.”\* And from this he infers that “by one offering” Christ has “perfected forever them that are sanctified,” and that “the worshippers, once purged,” have “no more conscience of sins.”

The same covenant is detailed in the numerous promises to the Church which are scattered through

\* Chap. viii. and x.

the Bible. “The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give GRACE and GLORY.” “The anointing which ye have received of Him *abideth in you*;—and even as it hath taught you, *ye shall abide in Him*.” Among these promises may be reckoned those which inseparably connect salvation with the *first* exercise of grace. “When thou hast found” wisdom, [once,] “then there *shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off*.” “For whoso [once] findeth me findeth life, and *shall obtain favour of the Lord*.” “Whosoever [once] drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall *never* thirst; but the water that I shall give him *shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*.” “He that cometh to me, [once,] shall *never* hunger; and he that believeth on me, [once,] shall *never* thirst.” “He that believeth [once] on the Son, hath *everlasting life*.” “He that [once] believeth on him that sent me, hath *everlasting life, and SHALL NOT come into condemnation, but IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE*.” “This is the will of Him that sent me, that *every one* which seeth the Son and [once] believeth on Him, may have *everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the Last Day*.” “Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward.” Among these promises may be reckoned those which absolutely secure to every believer *growth* in grace. “The righteous—shall

*hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."* "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "They go from strength to strength:—blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." "Every branch that beareth fruit, *He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.*" Grace in the heart, as well as in the world at large, is compared to a little leaven gradually leavening the whole lump;—to a grain of mustard seed which grows up into the largest of herbs;—to seed which a man cast into the ground, which sprung up and grew night and day, he knew not how, bringing forth, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." "The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither." "He shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careal in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Among these promises may be reckoned those which in particular cases assured good men of their final salvation long before their death. To Simon Peter it was said, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." To the eleven, "I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will

come again and *receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.*" To the church in Sardis, "*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*"

Such being the promises of the "everlasting covenant," both to Christ and the Church, it becomes a mark of God's covenant *faithfulness* to carry on the sanctification of His people to the end. "*Who shall—confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ: GOD IS FAITHFUL by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son.*—There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but GOD IS FAITHFUL *who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*" "THE LORD IS FAITHFUL *who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.* And we HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD touching you, that ye both do and *will do the things which we command you.*" "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. FAITHFUL IS HE THAT CALLETH YOU, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT."

To impress us with a deeper sense of the stability of this covenant faithfulness, it is expressly founded on the *unchangeableness* of the divine na-

ture: “I am the Lord, *I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*” On this basis rest of course the immutable love and purpose so often revealed in passages like these: “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them *unto the end.*” “As touching the election they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes; *for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*”

In this *unchanging faithfulness* of God the most enlightened saints have always confided, for the completion both of their own salvation and that of others. For the completion of *their own* salvation: “*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,*” said Asaph, “*and afterwards receive me to glory.*—My flesh and my heart faileth, but *God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.*” “I know whom I have believed,” said Paul, “and I am persuaded that *He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.*—*The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom.*—Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.”—For the completion of the salvation of *others*: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,” said Paul to the Philippians; “*BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS VERY THING, THAT HE WHICH HATH BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU, WILL PERFORM IT UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST.*” David had the same confidence in God respecting the salvation of all the saints: “The

steps of a good man are ordered *by the Lord*:—*though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand.*” “*The Lord—forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved forever.*”

There are many passages, too numerous to be quoted, which assert the doctrine without so distinctly bringing into view the divine agency. For a specimen take the following: “A just man falleth seven times, [*ever so often,*] and riseth up again.” “The fear of the Lord is clean, *enduring forever.*” “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord;—*his righteousness endureth forever.*—Surely he shall not be moved forever.—His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.—His righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.” “Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.”

If the saints may finally apostatize, what can be meant by “*the full assurance of hope*” which all are exhorted to acquire? and by the “*sure and steadfast*” hope which rests on the covenant of God? Is it merely a hope that they may happen to be in a gracious state when they die? But this is the common hope of the wicked, who nevertheless are said to possess “no hope.” What less can it mean than that triumphant confidence, involving the certainty of persevering, which Job expressed when he said, “I know that *my Redeemer liveth*, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy



this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.”\*

It cannot however be denied that there are many passages of Scripture which warn Christians against apostacy, which urge the necessity of enduring to the end, and some which, taken by themselves, *seem* even to speak as though a truly righteous man might finally fall. These passages may all be reduced to two classes :

(1.) Those which press upon *real* Christians the necessity of enduring to the end. These, so far from proving that they may fall away, are the very means by which their perseverance is secured. This may be illustrated by an occurrence in Paul's voyage to Rome. The angel of the Lord had assured him that not one of the company should perish; and yet when the sailors were deserting the wreck, Paul said to the centurion, “Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved.”† It

\* Job xvii. 9. and xix. 25—27. Ps. i. 3. and xix. 9. and xxxvii. 23, 24, 28. and lxxiii. 24, 26. and lxxxiv. 5, 7, 11. and lxxxix. 3, 4, 19, 29—33. and xcii. 12. and cxii. 1, 3, 6, 7, 9. Prov. iv. 18. and viii. 35. and xxiv. 14. Jer. xvii. 8. and xxxi. 31—34. and xxxii. 33—40. Mal. iii. 6. Mat. x. 42. and xiii. 31—33. Mark iv. 26—29. Luke x. 42. John iii. 36. and iv. 14. and v. 24. and vi. 35, 40. and xiii. 1, 36. and xiv. 2, 3. and xv. 2, 16. and xvii. 1, 2, 9, 11, 15, 17, 20—24. Rom. vii. 4, 6. and viii. 1, 2, 14, 15, 17, 33—35. and xi. 28, 29. 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. and x. 13. Gal. iii. 16, 17. and iv. 7. Eph. ii. 12. Phil. i. 3, 6. 1 Thes. v. 23, 24. 2 Thes. iii. 3, 4. 2 Tim. i. 12. and iv. 8, 18. Heb. vi. 11, 13—20. and viii. 6—13. and x. 1, 2, 9, 10, 14—18. 1 Pet. i. 4, 5. 1 John ii. 27. and iii. 9. Rev. iii. 4.

† Acts xxvii. 21—24, 30—32.

was certain that all the company would be preserved; and it was certain that the sailors would continue in the ship; and this threat was the very means by which the whole was secured. Now if you can find texts which peremptorily threaten real Christians with destruction in case of apostasy, they furnish an instance exactly parallel, and no more prove that real Christians *will* apostatize, than Paul's threat proved that the words of the angel would fail.

(2.) The other class speak of apostasy, not from *real* godliness, but from a *profession*, from *external* righteousness, or from a mere *conviction* of truth. Several of the strongest passages are expressly limited to some such meaning by their own context. Take for instance that memorable one in the sixth of Hebrews: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." This is probably the strongest passage to be found in the Bible. Now does this speak of real Christians? Certainly not; for to guard against such a construction it is immediately added, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of *you*, and things that *accompany salvation*, though we thus speak; [we are persuaded that you are real Christians, and of course will not be suffered to apostatize;] FOR *God is not* UNRIGHTEOUS to forget your

work and labour of love :” He is not so unfaithful to His promise as to suffer those who have given undoubted proofs of sincerity to perish. Take another instance from the 10th chapter of the same Epistle : “ If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. —The just shall live by faith ; but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Now does all this prove that real Christians may apostatize ? Certainly not ; for it is immediately added, “ BUT WE ARE NOT OF THEM WHO DRAW BACK UNTO PERDITION, BUT OF THEM THAT BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL.”

But every question respecting the previous sanctification of apostates, is settled once for all by a single verse in the First Epistle of John. There were in those days hereticks and profligates who had withdrawn from the communion of the Church. The question is, had any of them been real Christians ? John tells you, in language applicable to apostates in every age, and that sweeps off all these

objections at a stroke: “They went out from us, *but they were* NOT OF US; *for if they had been of us, they would* NO DOUBT *have continued with us*; but they went out from us THAT THEY MIGHT BE MADE MANIFEST THAT THEY WERE NOT ALL OF US.”\* In other words, *had they been real Christians they certainly would not have apostatized.* This settles the previous character of all apostates to the end of the world. Whatever number of texts then you may find that speak of apostacy, it is now ascertained that the apostates never were sanctified.

It has been said that this doctrine *tends to licentiousness.* Though after showing that it is a doctrine of the Bible I am under no obligation to answer objections, I cannot refrain from saying, that such a use can never be made of it by any but *hypocrites.* I appeal to a million witnesses that a *holy* heart feels no temptation thus to abuse this heavenly truth. I appeal to the history of the Church if the holiest of men have not believed it without becoming licentious,—if the principal part of the piety of past ages, especially since the Reformation, has not been connected with this belief. I appeal to that venerable saint whose aged eye daily looks towards heaven with “the full assurance of hope,” and with full confidence in this blessed truth, whether his assurance checks his hungerings after righteousness,—whether the “perfect love” which “casteth out fear,” is ready to return to

\* 1 John ii. 19.

sin,—whether “the spirit of adoption” which confidently cries, “Abba Father,” is less purifying than the dread of the slave. I appeal to Paul on his throne, whether the full assurance of eternal glory prompts a wish to return to pollution, or abates the ardour of his love.

Such an abuse of the doctrine is indeed chargeable upon *hypocrites* : and to guard *them*, (and all that is *wicked* in Christians,) against this abuse, those very warnings against apostacy were issued which you have brought forward to disprove the doctrine. Mark your inconsistency here. You say the doctrine tends to licentiousness ; and as soon as the Bible issues warnings to guard it against this abuse, and to silence this complaint, you fling those very warnings against the doctrine. What was done by the divine Spirit to protect it against your own objection, you convert into a new weapon of attack.

This subject, my Christian brethren, opens to view the astonishing grace of God, and traces back your salvation to its proper source, the counsels of the adorable Trinity. It shows you where your strength lies, and whence your hope springs. The Father, who eternally gave you to His Son, promised Him to take the tenderest care of you for His sake, and to see Himself to every part of your salvation. He promised Him to suffer no real evil to befall you, to supply you with every needed good, and to make you the happier for every event. He promised Him to defend you against

every enemy, to suffer neither Satan nor your own heart to prevail against you, and to bear you in His arms to the heavenly rest. Your strength, your hope, your salvation, depend on counsels settled in heaven infinite years before you were born. As sure as God is faithful, everlasting ages of glory are before you. When you have shed a few more tears in a strange land, your feet shall stand on Mount Zion, and you shall sing to your golden harps the endless song of grace. Already you touch the sacred threshold. Why go ye mourning all the day? Is it for an heir of glory to be sad? Lift up your heads and rejoice in God your Saviour, and in the everlasting covenant. Throw away these comfortless hopes which you draw from yourselves, and behold in the infinite resources of the ever-blessed Trinity the origin and completion of your salvation. When you get home to glory, how will then appear a Father's care! how the everlasting covenant that drew you from the pit! Then will you begin the song of grace. While you cast your crowns at His feet, as everlasting ages roll, you will swell the song of grace. Let us even begin it here, and say, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

## LECTURE XII.

### THE SYSTEM CONFIRMED AND APPLIED.

#### GALATIANS I. 8, 9.

BUT THOUGH WE, OR AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL UNTO YOU THAN THAT WHICH WE HAVE PREACHED UNTO YOU, LET HIM BE ACCURSED. AS WE SAID BEFORE, SO SAY I NOW AGAIN, IF ANY MAN PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL UNTO YOU THAN THAT YE HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.

THE truths which have been supported in this Course of Lectures, are far from constituting the whole Gospel. Besides the Trinity, the atonement, justification by faith, the retributions of eternity, and several other cardinal doctrines not taken up in the Course, most of the *precepts* of the Bible, and all the *invitations* and *promises*, belong to the Gospel. But I have selected four articles of faith, viz. Total Depravity, Regeneration, Election, and Perseverance, not only because they form an indissoluble chain, but because if these truths are believed and understood we shall not be likely to err in regard to the rest. As I passed along I touched also upon the Means of Grace, and the powers of man, on account of their relation to the other to-

picks; but the great hinges of the system, and what I had principally in view, were these four. To support these, I laid in the outset a foundation for the whole system by establishing on independent ground the doctrine of **Total Depravity**. I next showed you that from this truth followed the unavoidable inference that God must change the heart, uninduced and unaided by man, and must make one to differ from another according to His sovereign pleasure; all which could not be true if men were *not* totally depraved. I then proceeded to support this view of Regeneration by plain and positive declarations of Scripture. I next showed you that from this truth inevitably followed the doctrine of absolute, personal Election; which could not be true if Regeneration was *not* what it had been represented. I then proceeded to support this view of Election by a great number of texts of the most explicit and decisive cast. I next opened the Bible and showed you that none but the elect are regenerated. This being settled, it was apparent that from Election unavoidably followed the Perseverance of the Saints; which could not be accounted for on *any other* principle. I then proceeded to establish the doctrine of Perseverance by a large array of scriptural proofs; a part of which supported the point independently, and a part showed its indissoluble connexion with the preceding article.

There still remain some arguments in confirmation of the whole system, to be drawn from *the*



*analogy of faith*, and some remarks illustrative of the practical importance of the truths established. That I may glean up what remains, I will attempt,

I. To show, from some additional considerations, that these four articles, as they have been explained, really belong to the true Gospel.

II. To prove that every system which rejects these four doctrines, is "*another gospel*."

III. To urge the infinite importance of ascertaining, by deep and careful examination, what the true Gospel is.

I. I am to show, from some additional considerations, that these four articles, as they have been explained, really belong to the true Gospel. I say, *as they have been explained*, for the reasonings which follow must be understood as applicable to the doctrines in no other than the precise shape in which they have been exhibited.

(1.) It is apparent to reason that these four doctrines must *stand or fall together*. They support each other like the different parts of an arch, and you cannot tear one away without demolishing the whole structure. Or to use a more exact illustration, they are inseparable links of a chain, of which if one is supported the whole are supported. The entire system must stand, or every vestige of it must be destroyed. There is as much evidence that the whole is true, as that the whole is not false. To you who have attentively followed the train of reasonings in the foregoing Lectures, it must be apparent that the man who would overthrow one of

these articles, must demolish the four, and leave not a wreck of the system behind. Till one is prepared to perform the whole of this mighty task, he ought to beware how he undertakes.

(2.) These doctrines, thus indissoluble, are *separately* supported by four distinct and strong classes of texts. This shows you *the whole chain supported by a column under each link*, yielding to each a *fourfold* support. The literal meaning of four numerous classes of texts must be swept away before one of the articles can fall. To bring either of them into doubt, a man must march through the Scriptures, and twist into a forced construction the great body of the Sacred Writings.

That there are four classes of texts which speak severally of the moral deadness of man, the new birth, election, and God's preserving care of His saints, cannot be denied. The only question is, what do they mean? What are the four doctrines which they support? In their plain, obvious meaning they unquestionably support such doctrines as have been set before you. Is the plain, obvious meaning the true one? This is the only question that remains to be tried; and this, if I mistake not, may be settled, if any thing can be settled, beyond the power of controversy. At any rate I will try.

The general remark which I have to make is, that if you would get rid of the plain interpretation, you must set aside the obvious meaning, not of one, but of four distinct classes of texts, rela-

ting to four distinct subjects,—subjects connected by reason just as they are by the obvious meaning of the texts. To display this argument in a fair and perspicuous form, I observe,

[1.] That the four doctrines, in the shape in which they have been exhibited, appear to the eye of reason, (if you will suffer the expression,) like four timbers dovetailed into each other. Now to support the construction which gives them this form, the Scriptures join the doctrines contained in the four classes of texts, in the same order, and in each case show you plainly the mortise and the joint. The junction of Total Depravity and Regeneration is exhibited in this text: “You hath *He quickened* who were *dead* in trespasses and sins.” The junction of Regeneration and Election, in this: “Whom *He did predestinate*, them *He also called*.” Or this: “As many as were *ordained* to eternal life, *believed*.” The junction of Election and Perseverance, in this: “Whom *He did predestinate*, them *He also called*; and whom *He called*, them *He also—glorified*.” But because this is the most important joint of the whole, I will make it a little more visible by the following quotations: “This is the Father’s will,—that of *all* which *He hath given me* I should lose nothing, but *should raise it up again at the Last Day*.” “I lay down my life for *the sheep*. And other *sheep* I have which are not of this fold: them also *I must bring*, and they shall hear my voice.—But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.—

My sheep hear my voice,—and *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*" "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.—Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where *I am*, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." "Ye have not chosen me, but *I have chosen you*, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."\*

Perseverance, thus jointed in upon Election, is of course indissolubly connected with Regeneration; and this connexion is sometimes displayed without bringing Election into view: "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.*"†

Here then are the four doctrines as they stand in the Scriptures, joined together in the same order in which they are connected in these Lectures. This alone would go far towards confirming the construction which I have given; but there is one circumstance which establishes it, I should think, beyond the reach of doubt. Upon no other possible plan of construction can the doctrines contain-

\* John vi. 39. and x. 15, 16, 26—29. and xv. 16. and xvii. 2, 24. Acts xiii. 48. Rom. viii. 30. Eph. ii. 1. † 1 John iii. 9.

ed in the four classes of texts be strung together in one indissoluble chain. If you say for instance, that the *moral deadness* ascribed to man means a *pagan state*, that Regeneration is only a conversion from paganism to the *knowledge* and *profession* of Christianity, and that Election is nothing more than a selection of the *nations* to be visited with the *light of the Gospel*; here are *three* links, but where is the *fourth*? Perseverance is altogether excluded. But this is plainly connected with the rest as they stand in the Bible. Try any other plan of construction, and the result will be the same. The more deeply this argument is considered, the more plain it will appear that this construction must certainly be right. But in confirmation of it I have something still more decisive to offer. I add,

[2.] That the doctrines supported by the most obvious meaning of these four classes of texts, growing together as they do by the inviolable connexion of *premiss* and *consequence*, lend each other an influence to settle the construction *abundantly more than fourfold*. That a book in its obvious meaning should distinctly support a premiss, (say Total Depravity, as it has been explained;) and then by a literal construction as plainly support an inference deducible only from that premiss, (say Regeneration, as it has been explained;) and then in its literal import as decidedly support another inference deductive only from the former, (say Election, as it has been explained;) and then by

a plain construction as clearly support a third inference deducible only from the second, (say Perseverance as it has been explained ;) and after all mean neither, but something entirely different : is vastly more incredible than that it should speak unintelligibly on a *single point* in instances equally numerous. There is indeed one case which must be considered an exception. Where the writer is labouring to support a *figure of speech*, and carries out the figure through the several inferences, neither the premiss nor any of the consequences require or admit a literal construction. But nothing of this kind occurs in the present case. You find the texts belonging to each class detached, and scattered through the Old Testament and the New, incorporated with artless narratives, with proverbs, with sacred songs, with plain didactick discourses, with familiar epistles, and with every species of composition. You might as well say that the whole Bible is one figure of speech.

The strength of this argument may be faintly illustrated by the following case. You find it asserted twenty times in a history of Modern Europe, that a spark was communicated to a magazine in the neighbourhood of Rome. The meaning of the historian is called in question. I examine and find, in different parts of the book, twenty distinct assertions that a *dreadful explosion* was produced by the means. Here is a necessary consequence from the premiss as first understood. You still doubt the author's meaning. I examine again and

find, in detached parts of the narrative, twenty positive assertions that the explosion *shook the whole city of Rome*. Here is another necessary consequence from the latter. You still doubt whether the meaning in either case is understood. I search further and find, dispersed through the history in different forms, twenty plain declarations that the whole city was filled with *consternation*, and presently after with loud *inquiries how the magazine took fire*. Here is another necessary consequence from the last. I now ask whether the author's meaning is not more indubitably fixed than though he had repeated the first assertion eighty times, without noticing this string of effects?

But even this case does not express the full force of the argument, for want of a closer *mutual* connexion of the parts: for the explosion, the shock, and the consternation, might have followed from a volcano or an earthquake. Let us look upon the case as it really stands. I bring a numerous class of texts which plainly, and forcibly, and in all the varieties of language, assert the doctrine of **Total Depravity**, in the sense in which it has been explained. I fortify this proof with collateral points, that press upon the doctrine and force it into this precise shape; such as the nature of holiness and sin, the exclusive nature of love of the world, and several other things expressly taught in the Scriptures. You still doubt the correctness of my construction. I tell you that if I am right, you may expect to find in the Bible a doctrine that

is an unavoidable inference from this, but which cannot be true if this is false ; and that is Regeneration, in the sense in which it has been explained. To test my construction we go on to search for the doctrine of Regeneration, and find it supported, precisely in this shape, by the obvious meaning of thirty or forty plain and forcible texts. You doubt my construction of these texts. I tell you that if I am right, you may expect to find in the Bible a doctrine that is an unavoidable inference from the latter, but which cannot be true if the latter is false ; and that is absolute, personal Election. To test my construction we go on to search for the doctrine of absolute, personal Election, and find it supported by the testimony of a long catalogue of texts, in terms as precise and explicit as any language can furnish. After all you doubt my construction of these texts. I tell you that I have learned from the Bible that none but the elect are regenerated : if then I am right in the foregoing interpretations, you may expect to find in the Bible a doctrine which, after this information, becomes an unavoidable inference from absolute, personal Election, but which cannot be accounted for on any other principle ; and that is the Perseverance of the Saints. To test my construction still further, we go on to search for the doctrine of Perseverance, and find it supported by explicit declarations on almost every page of the Bible, many of which indissolubly connect it with absolute,



personal Election. Now I ask, is not this vastly more than a fourfold proof in favour of the construction given to *each* of the four classes? Had the whole number of texts been exclusively appropriated to support any one of these doctrines, they certainly would have yielded it far less support than they now do; for then they might have been more easily explained away. There would have been but *one* check to such an attempt, now there are *four*, and placed in such a relation to each other as to have incomparably more than four times the influence of one.

Suffer me to make another illustration of this argument, which comes a little nearer the truth than the one before attempted. A man appears in America, by the name of Luke, claiming to be a prophet, and gives many *decisive* proofs of a divine mission. You doubt the correctness of his claims. He says, "By this you shall know: if I am a prophet there is a child born to-day at such a place in Europe, by the name of John, who is a prophet too." You hasten to the place, and find the child giving abundant proof of miraculous powers, and constantly declaring, "If Luke had not been a prophet I should not have been born." You doubt the inspiration of John. He says, "By this you shall know: if I am a prophet there is a child born to-day at such a place in Africa, by the name of Mark, who is a prophet too." You hasten to the place, and find the child giving abundant proof of miraculous powers, and

constantly declaring, "If John had not been born a prophet, neither should I." You doubt the inspiration of Mark. He says, "By this you shall know : if I am a prophet there is a child born to-day at such a place in Asia, who is a prophet too." You hasten to the place, and find the child giving abundant proof of miraculous powers, and frequently saying, "If Mark had not been born a prophet, neither should I." I ask now whether you have not incomparably more evidence of the inspiration of *Luke*, than though you had staid at home and seen him perform *four times* as many miracles as he did? Have you not incomparably more evidence of the inspiration of *each* of the four, than though you had seen him stand alone and perform four times as many miracles as he did?

Let us now see the result of the whole. *Each* doctrine stands supported by the whole body of texts contained in the four classes, and cannot be shaken while *either* class is allowed to have a literal meaning. And being strung together, both by Scripture and reason, in an indissoluble chain, as premises and consequences, they lend each other an influence to fix the construction almost beyond calculation. How prodigious then is the proof in favour of the whole!—in favour of each! And now I ask, who can bring as much evidence to support the opposite tenets? The task to be performed by the man who would overthrow *one* of these truths, is to sweep away *the whole* of this im-

mense body of texts, with the incalculable influence they lend each other to settle the construction, and leave not a trace of the system behind. He who is not prepared for this herculean labour, with half the Bible meeting him at the threshold, should beware how he undertakes.

I cannot quit this head without reminding you that these are the truths which have been revered and loved by the great body of the Christian Church in every age. They stand conspicuous among what have been so often and justly styled "the glorious doctrines of the Reformation." To cherish and enjoy these blessed truths, our fathers left their native land, and planted churches in this howling wilderness. For these the New-England churches, during the first century and a half, would have shed their blood. And however unfashionable and proscribed they may now have become in a small district, these are still the doctrines which are ardently loved by four-fifths of the churches of New-England; which are held as corner-stones by the great body of Christians in the United States, and by millions and millions of the best instructed and most heavenly minded men throughout the world.

II. Every system which rejects these four doctrines, is "*another gospel.*"

Far be it from me to question the piety of all who on *some* of these points have confused ideas, and may in words deny them. I doubt not that many of the excellent of the earth, through the defect of light, have erroneous conceptions of Elec-

tion and Perseverance, and under these names oppose real errors. From not understanding theological terms, they deny in words what in fact they believe. Others have better hearts than heads, and possessing little power of discrimination, are unable, though light is spread before them, to distinguish so far as to dissolve wrong associations of ideas formed by early prejudice; and while they sincerely love some of these doctrines, continue very inconsistently to deny the rest. I have no reference to the mistakes of such; but to systems which, with a dreadful consistency, reject this *whole chain*; which soften down the representations of human depravity; which cast away Regeneration and experimental piety, and place all religion in *external* duties, performed with natural and selfish feelings, and teach men to hope for heaven by only cleansing “the outside of the cup and—platter;” which deny that “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord,” and set aside that eternal transaction between the Father and the Son which is the only foundation of the Church; which constitute every man his own keeper, and give him a claim to say when he arrives at heaven, “See, I have made myself to differ.” Such systems do not stop at a perversion of the four great classes of texts which stand directly under the four doctrines, but give a new interpretation to a vast many passages which lend a collateral influence to support these; and in their attempts to accommodate the Bible to the opposite errors, twist a large por-

tion of the Scriptures, and the most vital part of them, to a new and false construction. And when they have gone this length in frittering away man's dependance on grace, they are just prepared to place him completely upon his own works, to deny justification by faith, and of course the proper influence of the atonement. Short of this these systems never stop. And when they have gone thus far, there is but one step to a denial of the divinity of Christ, and the infinite demerit of sin. The next step is universalism, and the next, infidelity. But without pushing them to these extremes, it is evident enough that they are "another gospel" from that which comprehends the four doctrines. They have scarcely any thing in common with it. The God which they present is not the same. (This they allow and maintain when they are not under trial, and often allege that the God of Calvinists is a tyrant.) The administration of His government is not the same; the work of the Saviour is not the same; the work of the Spirit is not the same; the character and condition of man are not the same; the terms of salvation are not the same; holiness, the vital principle of all religion, is not the same. The whole plan of salvation, from the first counsels in heaven to the completion of the work in glory, is altogether changed,—changed so as to be exactly accommodated to a *proud and selfish heart*, AND FITTED TO FORM THE RELIGION OF A GAY AND DISSIPATED WORLD. This new gospel leaves "the carnal mind" undisturbed, and

even conceals and denies its existence. No wonder indeed that it finds no carnal mind rising up in its way, for *it is exactly such a religion as the carnal heart loves*. No wonder that it detects no “enmity against God,” for the god which it exhibits is precisely such a one as the selfish heart approves. No wonder that it calls for no radical change of heart, for the natural feelings of man, tutored by a few moral precepts, are precisely what pleases it best.

All this time this new gospel is nothing but a system of *enmity* against the *true* God. It violently resists *all those truths* IN WHICH THE REAL CHARACTER OF GOD IS CHIEFLY EXPRESSED. It shows *more* rancour against these than against any other set of reputed errors. Were there no other proof of its being “another gospel,” this alone would forever settle the point. A Jew may establish his synagogue by its side, and it looks on unmoved. A Roman Catholick, a Quaker, a Universalist, an infidel, may carry on his worship before its eye, and it tolerates them all. But let *these* doctrines and their kindred truths be brought forward, and there is a louder outcry than at all the rest. I wish to speak with candour and tenderness, for I know in whose name and cause I am speaking; but I should belie the steady voice of experience if I did not say, that this other gospel shows more rancour against the truths supported in these Lectures, than against any set of errors on earth, whether infidel, Jewish, Mahometan, or pagan.

It would rather the heathen nations should remain at the temple of Juggernaut, than be enlightened by truths like these; *and hence it opposes Missions.* It regards with greater displeasure *a revival of religion* upon these principles, than any of the dissipations of the theatre. It treats with more kindness and cordiality any of the men of the world, than the professors of this religion; even while, for certain ends, it stands by the tombs of our Calvinistick fathers, and sings hosannas over their dust! And is not this “another gospel”?

III. Allow me to press the infinite importance of ascertaining, by deep and careful examination, what the *true Gospel* is.

You have often read in your Bible, “He that *believeth*—shall be saved, but he that *believeth not* shall be damned.” It is then a settled point that salvation is suspended on a belief of the Gospel. But what is a belief of the Gospel? Not a belief of the proposition, that on the pages bound up in a certain volume divine truths are inscribed, without any specifick ideas of the truths themselves. Much less is it a *rejection* of the essential parts of those truths, and a belief of “*another gospel.*” On the belief of the *true Gospel* salvation is suspended, not on the belief a *false* one; on the acceptance of the *true Saviour*, not on the acceptance of a saviour as different from the true as a *creature* is from God; on the worship of the *true God*, not on the worship of a being decked out with attributes, and invested with a dominion, as different

from the perfections and government of Jehovah, as the supreme deity of the Brahmins is from the God of the Bible. It is capable of the most unquestionable proof that every cardinal error in religion is a misapprehension and misrepresentation of the character or government of God, and that every *system* of error actually supports a *false god*. It is equally certain that *enmity to the essential truths in which the character of God is expressed, is enmity to God Himself*. If then *idolatry* and *hatred of the true God* are not the faith on which salvation is suspended, a system of cardinal errors, persisted in after light is displayed, must debar from the kingdom of heaven. If he who merely believes *not* “shall be damned,” what will become of those who not only disbelieve the true Gospel, but build a false gospel on its ruins?

It becomes then as important as your eternal salvation to betake yourselves to the most solemn and diligent examination to discover what the true Gospel is. If the doctrines supported in these Lectures, and their kindred truths, really constitute the true Gospel, it is infinitely important for you to know it. But I fear that some of you will say, “These articles may be true, but my religion will do as well: no matter which is right *if we are only good*.” Here comes out that dreadful dogma, the invention and trick of modern infidelity,—soaked and drenched in infidelity to the very core,—THAT IT IS NO MATTER WHAT A MAN BELIEVES, PROVIDED HIS CONDUCT IS RIGHT. This



bantling of infidelity has been foisted into the Christian Church, and profanely baptised by the name of *Charity*. But though it wear a Socinian face, it has an infidel heart. It has nothing to do with charity but the name; for “charity,” if you will credit an apostle, “BELIEVETH *all things*,” and “REJOICETH IN THE TRUTH.”\* If this counterfeit, hollow thing, which dares to take the sacred name of *Charity*, had not renounced the Bible, it would have known that errors in faith are the offspring of a *wicked heart*, and are *criminal*, and *as decisive a proof of irreligion as immoral practice*. What else can be the meaning of a hundred such passages as these? “He—*upbraided* them with their *unbelief* and *hardness of heart*, *because they believed not*.” “O fools and *slow of heart* to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” “He that believeth not is *condemned* already, *because he hath not believed* in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And *this is the condemnation*, that light is come into the world, and men *loved darkness rather than light*, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doth evil *hateth the light*, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov’d.” “For this they *willingly* are ignorant of.” “They—became vain in their imaginations, and their *foolish heart was darkened*.” “Even unto this day when Moses is read, the vail is upon their *heart*; nevertheless *when it,*

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 6, 7.

[*the heart,*] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." "Having the understanding darkened,—through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.—He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." "A deceived heart hath turned him aside that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" "If—thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.—As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists.—They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not

written unto you because ye *know not the truth*, but because ye *know it*, and that no lie is of the truth.—Let that therefore *abide in you* which ye have heard from the beginning. *If that which ye have heard from the beginning remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.*—These things have I written unto you concerning them that *seduce you*. But the anointing which ye have received of Him *abideth in you*; and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.—Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many *false prophets* are gone out into the world.—They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them: we are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us: hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” “I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father;—whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but all they that have known the truth; for the truth’s sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever.” “I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that

*believeth not God hath made Him a liar.*" "This is *His* commandment, that you should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ." "If any man will do *His* will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." "Therefore speak I to them in parables, because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, and should be converted.—When any one heareth the word and understandeth it not,—this is he which received seed by the *way-side*.—But he that received seed into the *good ground*, is he that heareth the word and understandeth it." "Perceive ye not yet? neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?" "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." "God gave them over to a reprobate mind,—being filled with all unrighteousness,—without understanding." "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him." "If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." "In which

are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable *wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.* Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, *beware lest ye also, being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.* “For this cause God shall send them *strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*” “The heart of the wise *teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.*—There is a way that *seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*” “Whosoever transgresseth and *abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.* If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him *God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*” “Henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, FOR IT IS A GOOD THING THAT THE HEART BE ESTABLISHED WITH GRACE.” “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own *lusts* shall they heap to themselves teachers, having *itching ears*; and they shall turn away their ears from

*the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* "The works of the flesh—are heresies." "A man that is a heretick; after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself." "There must be—heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest." "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, EVEN DENYING THE LORD THAT BOUGHT THEM, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of;—whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."\*

If these and many more similar texts do not decide the point that errors are both blamable and destructive, it is in vain to attempt to prove any thing from the Bible. Indeed if a denial of one half of the truths of Christianity is not criminal, no reason can be given why downright infidelity is. And if infidelity is not, why did our Saviour say to the Jews, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins"? And why were the Jews

\* Prov. xvi. 23, 25. Isai. xlii. 20. Mat. vi. 22, 23. and xiii. 13—15, 19, 23. Mark viii. 17. and xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 25. John iii. 18—20. and vii. 17. and viii. 43—45, 47. Rom. i. 21, 28, 29, 31. 1 Cor. xi. 19. 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16. and iv. 3, 4. Gal. v. 19, 20. Eph. iv. 14, 18. and v. 17. 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12. 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. Tit. iii. 10, 11. Heb. xiii. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 1—3. and iii. 5, 16, 17. 1 John i. 5—7. and ii. 18—27. and iii. 23. and iv. 1, 5, 6. and v. 10, 20. 2 John 1, 2, 4, 9—11. 3 John 3, 4.

“broken off” and so dreadfully punished for “unbelief”? And why is it said to all nations, “He that believeth not shall be damned”? And will you after all say that a man is not answerable for his faith?

This point being settled, it is manifest that if the four doctrines which have been supported do in truth belong to the Gospel, the opposite errors, to say the least, must endanger your salvation. What language then can express the infinite importance of entering without delay on a deep and solemn examination into these matters? It is truly distressing to observe the dreadful indifference which prevails on the question, What is truth? Hence the lamentable ignorance of people who have been brought up under the light of the Gospel. Such indifference had not Paul when he said, and with an emphasis repeated, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel.—let him be accursed.” This baleful indifference, couched under the imposing name of *Charity*, threatens to yield up the last fragment of truth which we received as a legacy from our fathers, and to leave our poor children without inheritance,—except those delusions which will drown them in perdition. If any thing is likely to cut off our children from hope, it is this cruel indifference: for if you can once be brought to feel the importance of examining with earnestness and prayer, there is no fear for the issue. If then you have any compassion for your children, throw off this

apathy, and like the noble Bereans arise and search the Scriptures. In them you will find a confirmation of the faith of our fathers, and will hear them say, "Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the OLD PATHS, where is the *good way*, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."\* Every friend of the Church, every friend of society, every friend of the rising generation, ought to give no sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eye-lids till he has examined these first principles to the bottom, and become well grounded and settled in the truth. Drop every other concern, forget your business, forget your sleep, forget your food, till these questions are decided. O that there were a voice to send this heavenly mandate through every heart, "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES." If you find not there the doctrines which I have set forth, reject them: I charge you upon your peril, reject them. God forbid that I should wish to impose *my* creed upon you. Call no man master; but examine the Scriptures for yourselves. It is they who by business and amusements are detained from their Bibles, that drink in the poisonous errors of the day. With all the boast that is made of *Biblical learning*, it is a thing perfectly understood in the churches that there is little knowledge of the Word of God among the corrupters of the Gospel. How should it be otherwise? The way is there so plainly drawn that he who runs may read, and "the way-faring men.

\* Jer. vi. 16.



though fools, [need] not err therein.”\* Any plain, unlettered Christian who uses his Bible faithfully, may be led into all truth, without the aid of learned sophistry or boasting ignorance.

Were there but one chance in a thousand that these doctrines will prove true at last, no man, bound to the eternal Judgment, ought to rest till he has explored them to the bottom. For if they do prove true, and you venture forward into eternity upon the ground of a heartless morality, you are as certainly lost as though you were infidels. While you have the sure testimony of God in your hands, rest not,—I conjure you by all that is sacred, rest not your eternal all upon a doubtful basis.

One evil, never enough to be deplored, is that people do not and will not *distinguish*. They are pleased with different preachers who bring as different gospels as the koran is different from the Bible. They are as ready to put themselves in the way of hearing error as truth, and swallow down whatever comes, provided only it is gracefully administered. Such people are like children rushing into an apothecary's shop, and tasting at random of every vial, without the power of distinguishing medicines from poisons. It requires no spirit of prophecy to perceive that such a course is likely to prove fatal. If the doctrines supported in these Lectures are the truths of God, then those ministrations which soften down the representa-

\* Lev. xxv. 8. Hab. ii. 2.

tions of human depravity, which reject the Scriptural idea of Regeneration, and place all religion in external duties, performed with natural feelings a little improved, *are certainly leading men to perdition*, and ought to be *shunned* as one of the severest scourges ever inflicted by heaven on a degenerate people. I feel myself bound to offer this solemn testimony, and I do it without personal disrespect to any man;—*whoever preaches “another gospel” ought not to be heard a moment.* By hearing you countenance error, and hold up hands stretched out, (however unintentionally,) to scatter death; you expose yourselves to contagion, and by a fatal example lead your undiscerning children in the road to eternal ruin. Parents who do this must answer it to God. Would Paul have done this when he fervently pronounced, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel,—let him be accursed”? Would John have done this when he said, “If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for *he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*”? The blessed martyr Irenæus, who lived in the age immediately after the apostles, has preserved the following anecdotes of the beloved disciple, and of Polycarp, “the angel of the church of Smyrna,” who is so highly commended in the Revelation: “There are some now living,” says he, “who heard [Polycarp] relate this fact; that John, the disciple of our

Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and seeing Cerinthus within, [who among other things held, with modern Socinians, that *Jesus was only the son of Joseph and Mary*,\*] leaped from the bath unwashed, saying that he was afraid the bath would fall, as Cerinthus the enemy of truth was in it. And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him one day and said, **Do you know me? I know you to be the first-born of Satan.** So much fear," continues Irenæus, "had the apostles and their disciples of communicating even in word with any of those who corrupted the truth; as Paul also said, A heretick after one admonition avoid, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and is condemned of himself."† The genuineness of this record is fully confirmed by its being not only found in the Works of Irenæus, but quoted also by Eusebius.‡ Polycarp, you must know, was the disciple of John, and was, as Irenæus himself remarks, "not only taught by the apostles, and conversant with many of those who had seen our Lord, but constituted by the apostles in Asia bishop of the church of Smyrna," and in extreme old age gloriously suffered martyrdom.§ Irenæus himself was the disciple of Polycarp. He was born in Asia, near where John lived and died, and afterwards became bishop of Lyons in France. In

\* Irenæi lib. 1. contra Hæreses, cap. 26.

† Idem lib. 3. cap. 3.

‡ Eccl. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 23. & lib. 4. cap. 14.

§ Irenæi lib. 3. contra Hæreses, cap. 3.

his Epistle to Florinus, written in his old age, he says, "I saw you when I was yet a boy in the lesser Asia with Polycarp.—For the things which were then done I remember better than those which have happened lately;—insomuch that I could even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and reason, and his going out and coming in, and his manner of life, and bodily appearance, and finally the discourses which he delivered to the multitude, and how he told them of his familiar intimacy with John, and with the rest who had seen the Lord, as also how he rehearsed their sayings, and related the things which he had heard of them respecting the Lord, and His miracles, and doctrine, which Polycarp had received from those who had themselves seen the Word of Life.—These things which happened at that time, through the goodness of God I eagerly heard, writing them not on paper, but in my heart, and continually, through the grace of God, am revolving them with exactness in my mind. And in the presence of God I can make the solemn protestation, that that blessed and apostolick presbyter, had he heard any such thing, would certainly have exclaimed, and with his ears stopped would have said, as his manner was, Good God ! to what times hast thou reserved me that I should endure these things ! and would have fled from the place itself, in which sitting or standing he should have heard discourses of this sort."\*

\* Irenæi opera p. 339, 340. Paris. Ed. 1710.

Such was the spirit of the primitive Church,—of apostles and martyrs. But we are fallen on other times,—on times when it has become an unpardonable offence to frown at heresy, much more to *separate* from those who preach “another gospel.” They who have no wish to give offence or pain, but dare not for their lives place themselves and their dear children under the sound of “another gospel” *for a single day*, must be hunted out of the world because they do not grow to seats which resound with nothing else. They hear a voice from heaven, “Come out from among them and be ye separate,—and *touch not* the unclean thing;” and they fear to disobey. Let this be their apology and justification with all who have not renounced the Christian name. Indeed this separation had become indispensable. Were all the people to go on together a few years longer, the whole mass would be carried down the stream, and all the rising generation inevitably plunged into the gulph beneath. They have already kept together so long, under a false notion of *charity*, that even good people have almost lost the power of discrimination. This alliance between light and darkness is just as the enemy of God and man would have it. It is the *master-piece* of his policy to root out the last remains of the piety and faith of our fathers.

Before I conclude I must bespeak your most solemn attention to a few *Reflections*. I pray you to listen for a moment with no ordinary concern.

I have something to lay before you which is of more vital importance to you than any other considerations on earth.

If these four doctrines are eternal truths, what is to become of the greater part of my hearers? Are half of you upon these principles prepared for Judgment? If these doctrines are true, every one of you must be *born again* or lie down in everlasting sorrows. Neither your morality nor your indifference will screen you. *Have you been born again?* You are going on to eternity as fast as time can waft you. The interposition of a world could not retard your progress. Presently you will tremble on a dying bed. *Are you prepared for Judgment?* Those very eyes will see a falling universe. Those very feet will stand before the tribunal of Christ. I see the heavens opening, the Son of man descending, the dead arising, the world burning, and my dear hearers before the bar! Where now is that thin morality that covered an infidel heart? The omniscient eye has dissolved it by a look. I stretch forward my thoughts through the revolutions of a thousand ages, and find my hearers still fixed in heaven or hell. I wander through other periods as numerous as the moments in the first, and still I find you fixed in heaven or hell. Is such an eternity before you! and are you asleep! Are you not bringing all your powers into one effort "to make your calling and election sure"? Can you slumber with such an eternity before you? Dreaming of

the efficacy of your modes and forms ! Dream no more : you *must* undergo a radical change of heart. “ Verily, verily I say unto [you,] except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” How could such hearts as some of you possess be happy in heaven if admitted to the place ? hearts that do not love prayer, that do not love the Bible, that do not love Sabbaths, nor the society of God’s people. Will cleansing the outside prepare such hearts to relish an eternal illustration of Bible truths ? to relish a confinement to religious company, and the devotions of an everlasting Sabbath ? As well might the languid invalid who loathes his food, think to prepare himself for a feast by changing his coat.

If these four doctrines are everlasting truths, then every one of you who has not been born again, is at this moment an *enemy of God*, and lying under the *sentence of eternal death* !—bending under the curse of the Almighty when you go out and when you come in, when you rise up and when you lie down. And can you sport and be merry as though all was well ? Is this the time for gaiety and mirth ? Is it not the time to mourn, and weep, and break your hearts ?

But alas ! you *will not* weep. You have utterly ruined the temper of your minds, and are so implacable in your opposition to God, that nothing but His invincible power can break your hearts. This completes your ruin, and casts you wholly dependant on His sovereign will. On that will,

which all creation cannot change, your salvation absolutely depends. I press this point, because you *must* feel your ruin and dependance or be forever undone. O that we could see you prostrate at the feet of Him whom you have made your enemy by wicked works, deeply convinced of the justice of your condemnation, and that no other will or arm can save you. There, while crushed under infinite mountains of guilt, and sinking into eternal despair, you will see that the only way left you is to cast yourself on the resources of the adorable Trinity; you will see that your last resort is *sovereign* grace; and while trembling and confounded before the uncovered majesty and purity of God, you will see how much you needed a Saviour *absolutely divine*, that the sacrifice of a *creature* could not have answered for a wretch like you. In that spot I heard a voice! "Come unto me, poor, trembling, dying sinner, and I will give you rest. My name is Jesus, because I came to save my people from their sins." Trembling, dying sinner, did you not hear Him? Why then not arise and flee into His arms? Why lie there and die? He means *you*,—no child of Adam more than you. Why do you linger? Why do you tremble? The arms that are extended are the same that were stretched on the tree. Go, and the Lord God of Israel give you the desires of your heart!

Thus the system which has been supported in these Lectures, brings us at last to Calvary, and points to the cross of Christ. It is a circle the



centre of which is Christ crucified. Thus may all my preaching point to Him alone, and honour none but Him! There would I leave all my glory, thither direct all my praise. Let heaven and earth gather round this beloved name! Of all creation let this be the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"! To Him be the best honours which this redeemed world can rear! to "Him that loved us and *washed us from our sins in His own blood:*" "*who is over all.* GOD BLESSED FOREVER. Amen."













